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THE ASIANIC (ASIA MINOR) ELEMENTS IN NATIONAL GEORGIAN PAGANISM

according to information contained in ancient Georgian Literature¹

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[For list of Abbreviations see p. 66.]

I.

PROFESSOR I. JAVAKHISHVILI, of Tiflis, a well-known Georgian historian, gives us a picture of the religion of pagan Georgia in the second chapter of his standard work, *A History of the Georgian Nation*,² which is a result of his research into the customs and usages, tales and sagas of the Georgians.

Many interesting discoveries have been made by this tireless investigator of Georgian history and culture, which concern old Georgian paganism, as, for example, moon-worship in Georgia, which Strabo maintains was practised in Albania,³ and which according to Javakhishvili was doubtless in existence in the whole of Georgia from earliest times, and still exists there as the cult of St. George, etc. Also it has become much easier through Javakhishvili's researches to differentiate the elements of the Mazdaic religion—which influenced the whole spiritual life of the Georgians for several centuries before and after Christ—from the elements of national Georgian pagan religion.⁴

In spite of this, it must be said that the great Georgian historian is but a pioneer, and that Georgian paganism represents such a complicated subject for research, that science still has much to do to unravel its tangled elements.

Of course, all existing material on national paganism contained in ancient Georgian literature had been previously studied for this purpose, but, in our opinion,⁵ none of the Georgian or non-Georgian scholars who occupied themselves with the problem correctly grasped and estimated this information and in the end they even pronounced it to be of no value at all.

But, we consider that this very information of Georgian authors possesses great value, because it reveals the origin of those gods and cults which seem to have been known in Georgia from earliest

¹ The author gratefully acknowledges the help he received from Professor A. Götze, of Yale University, New Haven, U.S.A., and from Professor F. Sommer, of Munich, who directed his attention to many important details.

² Vol. i, 3rd ed., chap. ii, pp. 31-137, Tiflis, 1928 (in Georgian).

³ XI, iv, 7.

⁴ O. G. von Wesendonk, *Über Georgisches Heidentum*, Leipzig, 1924.

⁵ Expressed in *The Land of Hatti, its peoples, languages, history, and civilisation* (in Georgian), Constantinople, 1924.

times and which might be considered almost as native, whereas moon-worship and sun-worship, for instance, were practised throughout the whole of Hither Asia, Georgia included, without any possibility of ascertaining exactly from whence they originated.

Here we would like to examine once again the information preserved by the old Georgian authors concerning Georgian paganism which was misunderstood by the earlier scholars, and endeavour to show that this information points to quite different elements in Georgian pagan religion than it was formerly thought.

II

The most important works which contain some valuable material concerning Georgian paganism are: *The Conversion of Georgia*, *The Life of St. Nino*, *The Life of Georgia* (the "Georgian Chronicle")¹ and *The Life of St. John Zedazneli*. There is no doubt that there are indications in these sources which point to Asianic, i.e. Asia Minor, religious elements in Georgian paganism. *The Conversion of Georgia* was written in the seventh century; the oldest version of *The Life of St. John Zedazneli* which has been lost (we possess only a much later, altered edition, unfortunately)—at about the same time. *The Life of St. Nino* belongs to the ninth century, and the part of the *Georgian Chronicle* which deals with paganism, to the eleventh century.² Only *The Life of St. Nino* gives fuller details concerning paganism than does *The Conversion of Georgia*, while the author of the above-mentioned part of the *Georgian Chronicle*, Leontius Mroveli, merely quotes from *The Conversion* and copies *The Life of St. Nino* almost word for word.

The nature of the report, concerning paganism, which these sources contain, is so peculiar, that no question can arise as to whether these reports had their origin in the imagination of the Christian authors. Everything points to the fact that the authors compiled their works according to ancient traditions and ancient literary sources which to-day no longer exist, and thus the above-mentioned old Georgian sources have undoubtedly great value as material for research into old Georgian paganism.

The importance of the Georgian sources concerning the national paganism of the Georgians was, however, firmly disputed by the late Professor N. Marr, the eminent Georgian scholar of Armenology and Iberiology, in his *Bogi Yazycheskoy Gruzii* ("The gods of pagan Georgia"), published in 1902 in Russian in *Zapiski Vost. old. Imperat.*

¹ Quotations below from this source are from the variant of Queen Mary (= QMV), Ed. E. Taqaishvili, Tiflis.

² Javakhishvili, *History*, i³, pp. 203, 334 f., 337 f.; K. Kekelidze, *Bulletin de l'Université de Tiflis* (in Georgian), 1923, No. iii, pp. 28-31.

Russk. Arch. Obshch., vol. xiv. Professor Javakhishvili sided with him on this question of the value of information from Georgian sources and in the first and second editions of his *History*, vol. i, he shared Marr's views concerning deities mentioned in these sources.¹ In the third revised edition of his book, Javakhishvili doubts the reliability of the above-mentioned sources, as Marr also had done, and gives full explanations on this point. He proves incontestably that many of the accounts given in the sources concerning the conversion of the Georgians, the person of St. Nino and her mission in Georgia, the destruction of idols through the prayer of St. Nino, etc., are of fictitious and Christian-tendential character, even similar to such accounts by Agathangelos and Moses of Khorene, under whose strong influence were the authors of our Georgian sources.² But this does not at all diminish the value of the information as far as the deities themselves and the qualities ascribed to these deities are concerned — points which simply could not have been invented by the authors. And it is just this which is of primary importance to us.

III

In the above-mentioned sources, the following deities of the heathen Georgians are enumerated: *Armaz, Zaden, Gatsi, Ga* resp. *Gaim* in *The Conversion of Georgia* and in *The Life of St. Nino*; further *Ainina* and *Danina* in *The Life of Georgia* and in *The Conversion of Georgia*. Besides these in *The Life of St. Nino* and in *The Life of the Kings of Georgia* by Leontius Mroveli (in *The Life of Georgia*) still another deity is mentioned—The Chaldean goddess *It'rujan* resp. *It'rushana*.

Armaz, Zaden, Gatsi and *Ga(im)*, *Ainina* and *Danina* were idols in Mtskheta, the ancient capital of Georgia, set up by the kings. They were worshipped by king and people, who, on certain feast-days, brought sacrifices to them, as St. Nino herself had seen, and as, at the time of her Mission in Georgia, the reigning King Mirian had told her.

The information given in the old literature only mentions with certainty the feasts resp. the feasts and the offering of sacrifices to the god *Armaz* resp. to *Armaz, Zaden, Gatsi*, and *Ga*. But it may be assumed that there were other deities to whom idols were erected in the capital or elsewhere, and to whom, on their special feast-days, the required rites were performed.

¹ Marr has since changed his views on the subject, but he has never expressed them systematically. As many other scholars still share these views, we should like to criticize them—without dwelling on the fantastical views of Marr and his pupils, as, for instance, on the supposed identity of the name of the Georgian pagan god, *Zaden*, with the name of the Urartean king *Sardur*, etc., expressed on many occasions.

² Javakhishvili, *History*, i³, chap. iv, § 11.

Marr has maintained that all these gods were of Iranian or Semitic origin, and that the details mentioned by the Georgian Christian writers did not refer to national Georgian paganism, but to Mazdaism introduced into Georgia from Persia; they had described the Iranian cult of fire-worship resp. they had made from the Semitic names of deities found in Syrian literature Georgian national deities. Even the name of the chief deity of the Georgian heathen Pantheon *Armaz* is apparently the Georgianized form of *Ahura-Mazda*: *Armaz* = Armenian *Aramazd* = Persian *Ormuzd* (*Öhrmazd*) = *Ahura-Mazda*.¹ But if we examine still more closely the names of these gods and their attributes, mentioned in our sources, we shall see at once that Marr was in many respects mistaken and that the deities that we have here to do with were of Subaraean-Asia Minor deities, and that only one Semitic and probably one Sumerian-Babylonian are mentioned in Georgian sources.

Marr and Javakhishvili are justified in their criticism only in so far as we have to deal here with a not purely national Georgian heathen Pantheon.

IV

The name of the chief god *Armaz* certainly bears some resemblance to the name of *Ahura-Mazda*. This similarity in sound, such as the name *Armaz* has with *Ormuzd* (*Öhrmazd*), *Ahura-Mazda*, may well account also for the rendering of the Georgian name in the Armenian as *Aramazd*.² The fact remains, however, that *Armazd* was considered in all sources as the native, national chief deity of the Georgian Pantheon, although not called an *ancient god* "of our fathers"—as were *Gatsi* and *Gaim*. The *Armaz* religion was considered in the literature also as opposed to the *Ahura-Mazda* religion, and just as a native one opposed to the Persian one. It seems to us to be more probable, therefore, that the similarity of names in the case of the Georgian deity and the Persian god is purely external, and that the gods *Ahura-Mazda* and *Armaz* have in reality nothing at all in common.

But, let us suppose the name *Armaz* to be really identical with that of *Ahura-Mazda*. Such an identification was evidently a tempting one to the scholars, for we know that Mazdaism was introduced into Georgia long before Christianity and exercised a great influence on the entire life of the Georgian people. The Persians carried out an intensive propaganda for their religion, even using harsh means, in Georgia as well as in every other country under their political

¹ Marr, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

² Cf. *Life of St. Nino*, trans. by O. Wardrop, *Studia biblica et ecclesiastica*, Oxford, 1900, vol. v, 1; Armenian version by F. C. Conybeare, p. 74. Cf. J. Markwart: *Skizzen zur historischen Topographie und Geschichte von Kaukasien*, Wien, 1928, pp. 15, 18.

domination. This propaganda of the Mazdaic religion was directed, before the advent of Christianity in Georgia, against national paganism, and after the official conversion of the Georgians, against the Christian religion.¹ In Armenia, too, during Persia's long rule, Mazdaism had so uprooted national Armenian paganism that very little concerning the old Armenian pagan religion has survived. It might well be supposed, therefore, that Mazdaism had exercised a similar influence on the national Georgian pagan religion, so that Georgians might have used the name of the great Persian god *Ahura-Mazda* for their own chief deity in altered form of *Armaz*.² But this does not, at all, mean that they also acknowledged *Ahura-Mazda*, or that *Ahura-Mazda* had replaced their national chief deity.

Here now, the old Georgian sources come to our aid and from their description of *Armaz* according to the good old tradition, we learn that *Armaz* was an entirely different deity from *Ahura-Mazda*.

It is related in *The Life of St. Nino*, that St. Nino herself had seen the idol of *Armaz* when, on the great feast-day, she stood "near the idol at the edge of the wall". She had seen "a copper man (idol). On its body was a golden coat of mail, on its head a golden helmet. It had shoulder-plates on. It was adorned with onyx and beryl. And in its hand it carried a polished sword which flashed and moved in its hand, as if to warn any man who dared touch it, that by so doing he would sentence himself to death."³

According to Marr, Mazdaism had conquered and replaced national paganism in Georgia to such an extent, that at least the Georgian kings and noble followers of the official Iranian religion—no longer knew anything about the old national religion at the time of the conversion to Christianity in the fourth century. And therefore the authors of our sources could have had absolutely no idea of the genuine national Georgian paganism (although, perhaps, idols were actually in existence).⁴ The author of *The Life of St. Nino*, too, may have possessed no true information of the idol described in his work. He might have known only a description of the cult performed by the Persian magi in Mtskhet'a, that of fire-worship, and of the attributes of the magi, and from these attributes the author's imagination had produced the figure and the cult of *Armaz* (ibid.). We have to do here, namely, with the *barsman* of the magi, used for ritual purposes, and the tiara with pieces of cloth hanging therefrom, which covered the magi's cheeks and lips during the ritual.⁵

¹ Cf. Procopius, *BP*, I, 12.

² Cf. von Wesendonk, op. cit., chaps. v. and vi.

³ Ed. Taqaishvili, p. 21; cf. Leontius Mroveli in *Life of Georgia* (QMV), pp. 70 f.

⁴ Op. cit., p. 12.

⁵ Von Wesendonk, *Das Weltbild der Iranier* (1933), p. 158; Fr. Spiegel, *Eränische Altertumskunde*, iii, p. 592; Fr. Cumont, *Die orientalischen Religionen im römischen Heidentum*, Leipzig, 1931, table v, 5.

Marr now lets the Georgian author's phantasy identify the *barasman* of the magi with the sword of *Armaz*, and the tiara with its overhanging pieces of cloth with the helmet and the shoulder-plates of *Armaz*, and in this way create the figure of the chief deity of the Georgian heathen Pantheon. But, even granting that a recollection of the above-quoted description of the magi might still have existed in Georgia at the time of the author of *The Life of St. Nino*, it is quite unlikely that an author would identify a *barasman* with a sword, and a tiara and cloth hanging therefrom with a helmet and shoulder-plates, or, in general create a deity from a mere description of the magi!

On the other hand, the god *Ahura-Mazda* whose name is supposed to be identical with that of *Armaz*, is represented on the Bisutūn rock quite differently from the *Armaz* of the Georgian writers. *Ahura-Mazda* sits here on the winged solar disc and carries a garland in his left hand. This representation of the Persian god arose, as is well known, under the influence of the Assyrians, who represented the god Ashur in the same way, only with a bow in his left hand. This Assyrian form goes back to Hittite influence; the Hittites on their part took the solar disc symbol from the Egyptians.¹ But these Persian, Assyrian, Hittite, and Egyptian representations have absolutely no connection with *Armaz*, as he is described in our sources.

Of decided importance, here, is the following passage in *The Life of St. Nino*, "In fear everyone worshipped *Armaz* who carried the terrible sword in his hand—and said: 'Woe betide me, if I fail in any way in my worship of the majesty of our great god *Armaz*, or if I sin by talking to Jews, or by listening to the *Magi* when I meet sun-worshippers, and to other unreasonable talk about a great God in Heaven.' May he (*Armaz*) perchance find no fault in me and not strike me with his sword, before which the whole world is in fear."²

There is no doubt that here a distinction is made between the different religions, which, in St. Nino's time had their followers in Georgia: that of *Armaz*—the national Georgian; that of the *Magi*—the Persian (Mazdaic); that of the Jews; and that of "the great God in Heaven"—the Christian religion, which after the conversion of the Armenians by St. Gregory, also had its followers in Georgia.³

The follower of *Armaz* is afraid that he may be suspected of leaning towards other religions, or of connections with their followers, and that for these supposed misdoings *Armaz* might vent his anger on him. Among these religions *strange* to him, the religion of the magi, that is, that of *Ahura-Mazda*, is mentioned, and hence it strictly follows that the *Armaz* religion must have been entirely different

¹ Ed. Meyer, *Reich und Kultur der Chetiter*, pp. 35 f.

² p. 21; L. Mroveli, op. cit., p. 71.

³ L. Mroveli, op. cit., p. 73.

from that of *Ahura-Mazda* and that the gods *Ahura-Mazda* and *Armaz* could not possibly be identical.

Another passage of the same work is just as decisive on the question as to whether or not *Armaz* is identical with *Ahura-Mazda*. St. Nino related: "One day, when mighty and countless people set out from the town (Urbnisi, where St. Nino was at first) and went to the great city of Mtskhet'a, the seat of their kings, in order to do business there and to pray to their god *Armaz* . . . I went with them and we came to the city of Mtskhet'a, to the Magi's quarter, near the bridge. We stood there and saw the fire-worshipping people and the Magi, and I wept over their erring ways, because of their perdition."¹ This ends one chapter of *The Life of St. Nino*, and the second begins thus: "On the following day, booming and trumpet-blasts were heard, and countless people came out; in formidable crowds as numerous as the flowers (of the field?), came they out. The king did not yet move and at an indicated moment, everyone began to run and hide himself. Everyone ran to a hiding-place, when Queen Nana came out. And, when Queen Nana had driven past, all the people came slowly out again and adorned the square with drapery of every kind and with leaves (from the trees). And the whole crowd began to praise the king, and then King Mirian came out with his face shining. And I asked the Jewess this question, 'What is this?' And she said, 'The god of their gods, *Armaz*, commands them, that besides him there is no other idol.' And I went to see *Armaz*. The hills were covered with banners and with people, as numerous as the flowers. But I quickly entered the castle of *Armaz* and stood near the idol at the edge of the wall."² Then follows the description of the idol itself.

Marr thought that we had here a description of a feast which lasted two days, namely, the Persian religious festival. *The Life of St. Nino* and *The Life of Georgia* had, in his opinion erroneously taken this feast for two different feasts: the one was, according to these sources, that of the fire-worship of the *Persian Magi* and the other that of the worship of *Armaz* by the royal family and the people.³ Marr said that it is only in the later version of *The Life of Georgia* that this view is taken, but that the oldest one considers this to be one and the same festival. Now Marr maintains that the oldest version of *The Life of Georgia* is his abbreviated and imperfect Armenian translation of the twelfth century.⁴ But to-day we know for certain that Leontius Mroveli, the author of this part in *The Life*

¹ pp. 19 f., L. Mroveli, op. cit., pp. 69 f.

² p. 20; cf. L. Mroveli, op. cit., p. 70.

³ Marr, op. cit., p. 12.

⁴ The so-called *Armenian Chronicle*. See "Chronique Arménienne" in *Additions et Eclaircissements*, by Brosset, St. Petersburg, 1851.

of Georgia lived in the eleventh century and the compilation of *The Life of St. Nino* took place in the ninth century.¹ These texts are certainly much more reliable than the *Armenian Chronicle* of the twelfth century, which, as we have just said, is but an abbreviated and imperfect translation of the Georgian original.

The Georgian texts do not relate of *two* feasts; the passages in question are to be understood as follows: The authors of these sources knew that there were two pagan religions in Georgia: the foreign—Mazdaism—and the native—the worship of *Armaz*; and the difference between these two they strongly emphasize. They tell, neither of one feast which lasted two days, nor of two feasts, but definitely of only *one feast on one day*—of the *Armaz-feast*. St. Nino only saw the fire-worship accidentally, *on her way*, when she came to the city-quarter of the Magi "near the bridge", in Mtskheta, and not as a feast, but as the performance of a religious rite. And the people and the royal family set out *on the following day*, to go to the *Armaz* feast. In no other way but this is it possible to understand the above-mentioned passage of *The Life of St. Nino* and that of L. Mroveli's work. Indeed, the abbreviated Armenian version of *The Life of St. Nino* also tells of only one *Armaz* feast, without mentioning the passage concerning the fire-worship seen by St. Nino, which is contained in the Georgian original: "I followed the river (Kura) from the direction of the west, until the water turned to the east. And I reached Urnisi, and was there one month. And then I came with merchants to Mtskheta. And *on the day of the feast of Armazd* I followed the king, and all the people, . . ." ² says St. Nino.³

Thus it is quite certain that *Armaz* was an entirely different god from *Ahura-Mazda* and that his cult had no connection whatever with that of fire-worship. What kind of god, then, was *Armaz*? Can we comprehend his character from the scanty details about him which our sources contain? We think this can be answered in the affirmative, for we consider *Armaz* to be identical with the Subaraean or Hurritic weather-god *Teshub*.⁴

Teshub was also the national god of the Mitanni people whose language is related to that of the Hurrites,⁵ and who was second in the trinity of gods—*Khaldi*, *Te(i)sheba*, *Ardini*—of the Urartaeans,

¹ Javakhishvili, *The Object, Sources, and Methods of History, etc.*, i; K. Kekelidze, *History of Georgian Literature*, i (both in Georgian).

² Translated by F. C. Conybeare in O. Wardrop's op. cit., p. 73.

³ Cf. also Brosset, *Add. et Ecl.*, p. 21.

⁴ Cf. E. Forrer, *Die Inschriften und Sprachen des Hatti-Reiches*, ZDMG, N.F., i, Heft 2, p. 226; F. Sommer and H. Ehelolf, *Boghas-ko'i Studien*, x, pp. 48 f.; A. Götze, *Kleinasiens* ("Kulturgeschichte des alten Orients," in *Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft*, 3. Abt., I. Teil, 3. Band), p. 124; A. Ungnad, ZDMG, N.F. 10, pp. 372 ff.

⁵ Cf. Ed. Meyer, *Reich und Kultur der Chetiter*, p. 57; A. Götze, *Das Hethiter-Reich* (*Der Alte Orient*, Band 27, Heft 23), p. 10.

that is, of the pre-Indo-European people of Armenia.¹ The cult of Teshub which was spread throughout the whole of Hither Asia, and also in Asia Minor, was practised, as it has been ascertained, by various peoples of the old Hittite Empire—not only by the Hurrites whose national god he was, but also by the Hittites, Luvians and proto-Hattians. He was worshipped, as is well known, by Western Semites and Babylonians and Assyrians under the names of *Hadad* resp. *Adad*. The Sumerians called the same weather-god, *Ishkur*.

The Asia Minor *Teshub* was represented with a thunder-bolt in his left and an axe in his right hand, with sword in his belt and with a cap, ball-shaped on top,² and *Armaz* as described in *The Life of St. Nino* and by Leontius Mroveli reminds us of this Subaraean god. The idol of *Armaz* which "stood on the hill" in Mtskhet'a³ with the "flashing sword" and the "helmet" is just the Georgian *Teshub*, named by Georgians *Armaz*. *Armaz* stands "on the hill" in Mtskhet'a; *Teshub* as represented on the relief of Yasilikaia is carried by a panther standing on a mountain-top. *Armaz* carried a "flashing sword" in his hand; *Teshub*, who wears his sword in his belt, holds the thunder-bolt and battle-axe in his hand. *Armaz* wears a helmet, *Teshub* his cap. In spite of a few deviations, the picture of *Armaz* is similar to that of *Teshub*. The Georgian conception of *Armaz* with his "polished sword which flashed and moved in his hand", and his helmet, corresponds with that of *Teshub* who carried his thunder-bolt and his axe, and wore a sword in his belt and a helmet-like cap on his head. Both gods are represented as war-gods and *Armaz*, like *Teshub*, is a heaven-god, lord of the air, a weather-god, as his epithets show: "the giver of rain,"⁴ "the thunderer," etc.⁵

Now we must admit that *Armaz* is not a Georgian name, its etymology cannot be ascertained from Georgian. But this is no argument against his cult in Georgia, resp. for his identification with *Ahura-Mazda*, with whom, except his name-similarity, *Armaz* has nothing in common. It is also true, that the weather-god was worshipped by many peoples of the Hittite empire (second millennium B.C.) where he was known by his native names, and invoked in the native tongues: by the Hurrites in Hurritic, as *Teshub*; by the Hattians or proto-Hattians in proto-Hattian, as perhaps,

¹ Cf. Sayce, *The Cuneiform Inscriptions of Van*, xiv, 1882; *Corpus Inscriptionum Chaldaicarum*, 1928, 1935, etc.

² Cf. Ed. Meyer, *Reich und Kultur der Chetiter*, p. 67, figs. 56 and 57.

³ Cf. *The Conversion of Georgia* in *La Langue Georgienne* by Marr and Brière, Paris, 1931, p. 570.

⁴ Cf. *The Life of St. Nino*, p. 37; Leontius Mroveli, op. cit., p. 87.

⁵ Conybeare, op. cit., p. 65 f., according to Moses of Khorene, *Hist.*, ii, 86. See, for instance, the epithets of the Babylonian weather-god, *bēl nagbi ū zunni* "lord of springs and rains" (V R 56, Col. ii, 41), *Šamānu* "the thunderer" (H. Zimmern, *KAT*, p. 443) and many others.

*Zašhapunas*¹; by the Hittites (the ruling people who had a West-Indo-European language strongly interspersed with the elements borrowed from the non-Indo-European languages of the aborigines of Asia Minor) in Hittite, under a name not as yet known; by Luvians, who were related to the Hittite, in Luvian, as perhaps *Dattaš*.² This is the same *Zeus* of Labraynda, with the battle-axe, *Zeus Βροντών*, *Zeus Κεραύνιος*, *Zeus Στράτιος* of the later Asia Minor peoples and of the Aegean peoples related to them.³ Among none of these peoples do we find the weather-god called *Armaz* or any similar name which the Georgians might have adopted.⁴ But there were in the Hittite empire itself and in countries bordering on it, many peoples whose literary monuments are as yet undiscovered or never existed, and it is not impossible that the weather-god of one of these tribes bore a name identical with *Armaz*, or similar to it, and this name was adopted by the Georgian tribe *K'art'-u-el-i*,⁵ or another

¹ A. Götze, *Kleinasien*, p. 130, note 9; Sommer and H. Ehelolf, *Boghaz-höi Studien*, x, 49.

² E. Forrer, op. cit., and *Die Acht Sprachen der Boghaz-höi Inschriften*, Sitzungsberichte der Preuss. Akad. d. Wiss. phil. hist. Kl., 1919; F. Fr. Hrozný, *Boghaz-höi Studien*, v; A. Götze, *Kleinasien*, p. 130, note 9.

³ E. Meyer, *Geschichte des Altertums*, i, §§ 481 f.; A. Evans, "Mycenean Tree and Pillar Cult and its Mediterranean Relations" (in the *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, xxi, 1901), pp. 99 f.

⁴ *Armaš* (*m.Arma-šU* = *m.šim-šU-aš* cf. A. Götze: *Hattušiliš in the Mitteilungen der Vorderasiat.-Ägypt. Gesellschaft*, 1924, 3, pp. 17 f., § 4, ll. 27, 33) was probably the Moon-god of the Lydians. (Cf. A. Götze: *Kleinasien*, p. 195) and therefore no weather-god and cannot be compared with *Armaz*.

⁵ The possibility of the connection between the Georgian ethnical *K'art'-u-el-i* (*K'art'-u/v-el-i* < **K'art'-u/v-el-i* "Georgian") with *Kat-a-on-ian*, the name of an old proto-Hattian country (cf. Ed. Meyer, *Reich und Kultur der Chetiter*, p. 156; Sommer-Ehelolf, *Boghaz-höi Studien*, x, p. 1) will not be discussed here. It should be remarked only, that the old Greek authors, as Strabo relates (xii, 1, 2), regarded the Kataonians as people quite different from the Cappadocians, although in Strabo's time they were not to be distinguished either by their speech or by their customs from the rest of the Cappadocians. Could then Kataonia have been the native home of the *K'art'-i* tribe who immigrated (in the first millennium B.C. and certainly after the invasion of the Cimmerians in Asia Minor) to Caucasia? Other tribes, *Kaşkai*, *Muškai*, *Tabalai* stood in the closest relation to the Hittite empire, both as subjects and as foes. The *Kaşkai*, who lived in the north-eastern regions of the Pontic mountains, often fell upon the Hittite empire, and they, together with other related tribes, contributed to its collapse at the end of the thirteenth century B.C. (Cf. Ed. Meyer, *Geschichte des Altertums II*, i, pp. 438, 443, 447, 472; A. Götze, *Das Hethiter-Reich i der Alte Orient*, 27, 2, p. 43). Since the time of the Assyrian King Tiglath-Pileser I. (12th cent.), these tribes were constantly at war with the Assyrians after they had gained a firm footing in the old Hittite provinces (in the whole of Cappadocia and Cilicia, although they had to recognize the supremacy of the Assyrians (Cf. G. Forrer, *Die Provinzeinteilung des assyrischen Reiches*, Leipzig, 1921, pp. 73-83). After the invasion of the Cimmerians (7th century B.C.) they went north-eastward, and at the time of Herodotus and Xenophon we find them on the south-east coast of the Black Sea and in Caucasia as Moskhians, Kolkhians, Tibarenians, etc.—the tribes who later made up the Georgian nation. It seems that this immigration of the Georgian tribes into Caucasia had been preceded by the immigration of other tribes, who now live in northern Caucasia, the Abkhasians, Circassians, etc. Of great interest in this respect is the work of Julius von Mészáros, *The Pākhy Sprache* (Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, *Studies of Ancient Oriental Civilization*, No. 9) where the author seeks to prove the relationship between the Pākhy language, which is closely akin to the Abkhasian tongue, and the proto-Hattian (op. cit., pp. 28-33).—The Pākhy language is that of a small North-Caucasian tribe who emigrated from Abkhasia in 1871-6, and now dwell in north-west Anatolia, in the Vilayets Balikesir and Izmid.

tribe and retained after these people have immigrated into Caucasia and made their dwelling-place there. Much later, when Georgia stood in close relation with Persia, one thought of the similarity of the name *Armaz* to that of *Ahura-Mazda*, and probably this explains the following passage in Leontius Mroveli's work¹: "he (King P'arnavaz) made a big idol called after his name. This is *Armaz*. For *Armaz* was called *P'arnavaz* in Persian," that is *x'arənahvant*—brilliant, splendid, endowed with *x'arənah*—(mystic) brilliance. So they imagined in Mazdaic Persia the gods *Ahura-Mazda*, *Mithra*, etc., and the kings who were thought to be the earthly representatives of the heavenly ruler.²

But this has nothing to do with the true identity of the two gods *Armaz* and *Ahura-Mazda*. We need only call to mind Jupiter Dolichenus. The Jupiter, who was worshipped in the Doliche, Northern Syria, whose cult was introduced into Europe by the Syrian and Roman soldiers and also by the merchants and slaves in the third century B.C., was originally *Teshub*.³ This Jupiter *optimus maximus Dolichenus* was *natus ubi ferrum exoritur*, or *ubi ferrum nascitur*, as the statement on the inscriptions reads.⁴ According to Fr. Cumont,⁵ the worship of the god was brought to Kommagene by Khalybian smiths. On Syrian soil the god became *Ba'al (šamain)*, that is, "Lord (of the Heavens)". In the time of the Achæmenides he was identified with *Ahura-Mazda*, because *Ahura-Mazda* was also represented as "the whole circle of the Heaven".⁶ Still later, in the time of Antiochus I. of Kommagene, he became *Zeus-Oromazdes*. Now the Khalybians, on account of their skill as smiths, were a famed Georgian tribe, but by what name they knew *Teshub* is not known to us, unfortunately.

Also the erection of idols to *Armaz* and to other deities, of which our sources relate, can in no way be considered as the first introduction of the cult of these deities. The question is of the building of places of worship for the gods worshipped in the country, who had probably such places of worship in various localities.

L. Mroveli recounts nothing else of King Rev but that he "brought home from Greece, his consort, who was the daughter of Logothetes,

¹ Op. cit., p. 21.

² Moreover, the weather-god, the director of the heavens and of the clouds, lord over hail, rain, etc., was called by the Georgian mountain-folk of the Khevsurs, *Piri-mze* (Javakhishvili, *History* i², p. 72) which means, word for word, "Sun-face," "brilliant," "radiant face"—the same epithet that *Armaz* must have had in the Persian tongue.

³ See Ed. Meyer, *Reich und Kultur der Chetiler*, p. 119, fig. 89.

⁴ Ibid., p. 122 and p. 163 resp. p. 120.

⁵ *Die Orientalischen Religionen im Römischen Heidentum*, Leipzig, 1931, p. 135; cf. also *Revue Archéologique*, i, 1905, p. 190.

⁶ Herod., i, 131.

by name Sephelia, and Sephelia brought her idol by name, Aphrodite, with her and erected it on the height of Mtskhet'a".¹ The heathen Grecian woman even had built a place of worship for *her own* goddess in her new home; but this does not signify in any way that the worship of the Greek Aphrodite was thus introduced into Georgia.

Javakhishvili admits that *Armaz* and, in general, the information about him, with the exception of the name-similarity, have nothing to do with the Persian *Ahura-Mazda*.² But he also gives expression to his doubts thus: The cult of *Armaz-Ahuramazda* certainly existed in Georgia, but the information of the author of *The Life of St. Nino*, that Mazdaism had been the idol-worship in Georgia and *Armaz-Ahuramazda* was figured as an idol, is not correct. Neither by Gelasios of Caesarea (fourth century) who in his history of the Church tells about the conversion of the Georgians according to the account of a Georgian (Bakur), nor in *The Conversion of Georgia* is mention made of the destruction of the idols of *Armaz* and of other gods through the prayer of St. Nino. It is Moses of Khorene, who in his *History*,³ relates how St. Nino, on the order of St. Gregory (the "illuminator" of the Armenians) had destroyed the idols after the conversion of the Georgians. The author of *The Life of St. Nino* gives the same information, but, according to him, the saint destroyed these idols before the conversion of the Georgians. Doubtless these miracle stories are later interpolations and go back to Agathangelos, the author of *The Life of St. Gregory*, which was the source used by Moses of Khorene in recounting these stories, the Christian tendential version of which was written in Caesarea in the 7th century. In the Georgian hagiographic source *The Life of St. Shushanik*, by the priest Jacob (5th century) Mazdaism is not presented as idol-worship and *Armaz* and his idol are not mentioned at all. The Georgian historian, Juansher (11th century) also does not consider Mazdaism as idolatry, but describes it as fire-worship. The Georgian people could not have forgotten *Armaz* so completely after their conversion if he was really worshipped as their chief god in the 4th century and if his idol stood near the capital. The geographical name *Armaz-tsikhe* (Armaz-castle) does not justify us in taking the existence of the idol for granted and in believing that he, that is, *Ahura-Mazda*, was worshipped in the form of an idol. As already stated, we have in the oldest sources no information on this point, and *Armaz* has not been preserved, either as god or as mythical figure, in the popular religion. On the other hand, even to-day much of Mazdaism still remains in the popular religion of the Georgians. Moreover *Armaz*—in the geographical name of *Armaz-tsikhe* has

¹ Op. cit., p. 43.

² *History*, i², p. 97.

³ II, 86.

perhaps some connection with the name of the Urartean King *Arame*, not with *Ahura-Mazda*.¹

Now we do not consider that Javakhishvili's objections can be taken as conclusive. Of course, miracle-stories of the destruction of the idols, etc., by the author of *The Life of St. Nino*, by Moses of Khorene and by Leontius Mroveli, are legends which the Christian authors recounted farther in their tendentious writings or perhaps they imagined them. But, as already stated, that cannot in any way affect the fact of the existence of the idols, or of the worship of the heathen gods, of *Armaz* and others. That Gelasios of Caesarea and Rufinus² have written nothing concerning the destruction of the idols through the prayer of St. Nino, proves nothing. The Georgian, Bakur, might only have told Gelasios the essentials about the conversion of his country, or, which is more probable, Gelasios might have noted down what he considered to be the essential points in Bakur's story. It is true that in *The Conversion of Georgia* there is nothing about the destruction of the idols, but there are mentioned heathen gods and their idols which were "erected" by the kings,³ and it is this which is of decisive importance here. After all, the whole misunderstanding, as far as Javakhishvili is concerned, is based on the fact that Marr identified *Armaz* with *Ahura-Mazda* and that Javakhishvili himself shared this view. But if the Georgian *Armaz* and the Persian *Ahura-Mazda* are not considered to be identical, then immediately every difficulty disappears in the interpretation of the Georgian and also of the Armenian sources, for the Armenian authors must have taken their material concerning Georgian paganism from Georgian sources. Then it also becomes clear why the priest Jacob did not mention *Armaz*. There was no need to mention him because the apostate Wask'en the *Pitiakhsh* was converted not to the *Armaz*, but to the Persian Mazdaic faith, for which he was bitterly reproached by his wife, Shushanik, a pious Christian. In regard to Juansher's work too, the question refers to the *Persian religion* and not to *Georgian idolatry*, when he says: "And the Persians conquered K'art'li (5th century) and desecrated the churches. And the Georgians hid the crosses. And in all the churches of K'art'li the Persian fire-worshippers kindled fires."⁴ The author of *The Life of St. Nino* indeed does not identify *Armaz* with *Ahura-Mazda*, but strictly differentiates between the cult of *Armaz*, that is, the *Georgian idol-worship* and that of *Ahura-Mazda*, the *Persian fire-worship* as already mentioned above. Javakhishvili is disconcerted

¹ *History*, i³, pp. 97-101.

² A. Glas, *Die Kirchengeschichte des Gelasios von Kaisareia, die Vorlage für die beiden letzten Bücher der Kirchengeschichte Rufinus* (Byzantinisches Archiv, Heft. 6).

³ Marr et Brière, op. cit., p. 570.

⁴ *Life of Georgia*, p. 117.

by the following passages in *The Life of St. Nino*: "The Georgians served strange gods", "worshipped fire and stones and woods", and at the same time the "saint saw the fire-worshipping people and the Magi", and she wept "over their erring ways", and he says: "Consequently it seems that Georgians of the fourth century must have been fire-worshippers—both king and people."¹ Not exactly that! St. Nino (according to the author of her *Life*), saw the performance of different cults, which were practised for different deities, both foreign and native, among these cults being the Persian fire-worship, in which, perhaps, Georgians also took part. It is about this that our source reports, and therefore no contradiction is to be seen in the above-quoted words of the hagiographer. That the name *Armaz* was forgotten by the Georgian people after their conversion is no wonder. The new Christian religion had taken care that the names of the pagan deities and their idols, as well as their cult in general, were eradicated, as St. Euthymius Mt'adsmindeli has also testified.² The god *Armaz*, that is, the weather-god (not *Ahura-Mazda*) appears under other names—St. Elias, Piri-mze (sun-face), etc., in the Georgian popular religion, even at the present time, just as the moon-god was worshipped and is still worshipped under the name St. George, by all Georgian tribes for centuries after the advent of Christianity—facts which have been so brilliantly demonstrated by Javakhishvili himself.³ The geographical name *Armaz-tsikhe* ("Armaz-castle") undoubtedly is no justification for believing that *Ahura-Mazda* was worshipped in Georgia in the form of an idol. This was not maintained by the authors of our sources, as already shown. But that the name is actually a combination—*Armaz-tsikhe* < *Armaz-is-tsikhe* ("Armaz-castle") cannot be doubted.⁴ In *The Life of Georgia* it is related: "This K'art'los (the Eponym-ancestor of the Georgians), at first came to the place where (the river) *Aragvi* unites with (the river) *Mtkvari* (Kur). And he ascended the mountain which is called *Armaz* and first he erected there a fortress and built himself a house. Until the setting up there of the idol to *Armaz* this mountain was called K'art'li . . ." (p. 5). "K'art'los died and was buried on the summit of K'art'li called *Armaz*" (ibid. p. 6). "The main fortress (near Mtskhet'a) which is *Armaz*" (ibid. p. 15). "King P'arnavaz (3rd century B.C.) set up the *Armaz* idol on the summit of (the mountain) K'art'li and from that time it (the mountain) received the name

¹ *History*, i², pp. 99 f.

² *Ibid.*, i², p. 80.

³ *Ibid.*, i², chap. ii, §§ 2-3.

⁴ *Armaz* certainly had absolutely no connection with the Urartean King *Arame*, adversary of the Assyrian King Salmanassar II. (9th cent. B.C.). *Armaz* < *Arame* is phonetically impossible, and also historically no connection between these names can be imagined.

Armaz, after the idol" (ibid. p. 21). It is not the legends of K'art'los and P'arnavaz that are important here, but the names of the mountain and fortress, the castle near Mtskheta, which were called after the god *Armaz*—whether after the time of P'arnavaz or before him, is of no consequence here—and which names have been retained for centuries until the present time. *Armaz(is)-tsikhe* ("Armaz-castle") and *Armazis-mt'a* (Armaz mountain). *Armaz-tsikhe* is also to be found in the works of ancient writers, as Ἀρμोजική,¹ Ἀρμάστικα, erroneously Ἀρμάκτικα,² Harmastis.³

The Georgian ethnologist S. Makalat'ia in his work on the Mithra religion in Georgia, inclines to think that *Armaz* is rather to be considered as identical with Mithra. According to him the cult of Mithra, which was spread throughout Asia Minor and Armenia was probably also practised in Georgia, although neither the old Georgian literature nor the archaeological monuments provide any direct testimony of it. But Moses of Khorene says that in Mtskheta "the people were wont at early morn to worship from their housetops that image (of *Armaz*) aloft their eyes",⁴ which might point to sun-worship. According to Marr,⁵ *Zaden* may be identified with Yazata of Avesta, even with Mithra. O. G. von Wesendonk also accepts this identification, for Iberians worshipped the sun deity which we probably have to recognize in *Zaden*, the equivalent of the Iranian Mithra.⁶ In different provinces, Georgians even to-day worship a deity, called by Megrians *Mirsa*, by Svans *Meysari*, by Gurians *Moysari*, which may easily be considered the equivalent of Mithra. Megrians celebrate the *Mirsa*-feast before Lent. On the feast-day, which is always on a Thursday, a pig is killed, rolls are baked, and eggs are cooked. The members of the family take these rolls and eggs, touch their eyes with them and beg *Mirsa* to protect them from eye-disease and to grant them good eyesight, etc. The Svans and Gurians celebrate this feast in similar fashion and pray to the deity for the same favours. Here we have to do with Mithra, for he was esteemed as the eye of *Ahura-Mazda*. His emblem was the eye. The egg, as the symbol of life, was considered by Mithra worshippers to be the symbol of the god; and the wild boar, as is well known, was Mithra's animal. On the silver handle of a cult vessel found in Mtskheta near the wall of the old cathedral (since 1879 the object was in the Caucasian Museum, but is now in the Georgian Museum in Tiflis), Mithra is portrayed with his

¹ Strabo, xi, C. 501.

² Ptol., v, 11, 3; viii, 19, 4.

³ Plin., vi, 29.

⁴ *Bulletin du Musée de Géorgie*, iii, Tiflis, 1927, pp. 180-192.

⁵ *History*, ii, 86; see Conybeare, op. cit., p. 66.

⁶ Op. cit., p. 7.

⁷ *Über Georgisches Heidentum*, p. 84.

attributes: solar disc, tiara, shoulder cover, staff, boar's head, raven-head and stove.¹ The bronze statue found in Megrelia in 1925 (now in the Museum of Zougdid) with the Phrygian cap and the remains of a shoulder-cover, is also undoubtedly a statue of Mithra. Old Georgian kings bore such names as *Mirian* < *Mihran*, *Mirdat* < *Mihrdat*, which contain the name of the god *Mihr*, that is *Mithra*. Perhaps the name *Amiran* (Arm. *Mher*) of the hero of the famous Georgian *Amiran-Saga*, may also be traced back to *A-mihran* < *A-mithran*. Javakhishvili also considers this possible²; and in general there is much in the Georgian version of the *Shah-Nameh* and in the *Avesta* texts that points to the resemblance between the *Amiran* tales and the *Mithra* legends. Again, in the Georgian *T'et'ri Giorgi* (St. George, the "White George" who sits on a white horse), *Mithra* is probably hidden. All these prove indeed that the *Mithra* religion truly existed in Georgia and justifies us in concluding that the *Armaz* described in *The Life of St. Nino*, with his helmet, shoulder-cover (?), polished-sword, etc., is one and the same god as *Mithra* of whom we have similar representations,³ and who is further described in *Khorda-Avesta*⁴ thus: "Mithra is a warrior with the silver helmet; he is clothed in the golden coat of mail; he carries a piercing dagger; he holds in his hand a long sword, and sits on the white horse," etc.

Now we should like to make the following observation concerning Makalat'ia's arguments: It is just from these arguments that we can suppose that the *Mithra* cult in Georgia, although in existence, was not widespread. Up to now, no *Mithraeum* has been discovered in Georgia, and if one were found, it would have to be proved whether it was a Georgian sanctuary of *Mithra*. The information given by Moses of Khorene, that in Mtskheta *Armaz* was venerated at dawn, does not prove that *Armaz* was *Mithra*, the sun-god. *Armaz* was worshipped as the chief deity who was also god of heaven, spreader of the sun, etc. (See below, Section 5). The vessel-handle found in Mtskheta and the statue found in Megrelia are evidently of foreign, not Georgian workmanship, and they in no way point to the diffusion of *Mithra* cult in Georgia. There is also nothing to indicate that they belonged to a Georgian *Mithra* sanctuary. The worship of *Mirsa* (resp. *Meysari*, resp. *Moysari*) in Georgia may well go back to the old *Mithra* cult in this country, but does not show that *Mithra* was ever the chief god of the Georgian Pantheon, as *Armaz* was, but shows that he was worshipped as a foreign god of light, and it is only as the protector of eyesight that he is still invoked in some provinces of Georgia.

¹ *Bulletin du Musée de Géorgie*, iii, table viii.

² *History*, i³, p. 148.

³ Fr. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments figurés relatifs aux mystères de Mithra*, ii, Paris, 1896 f., Nos. 61, 215, 218, 283, etc.

⁴ J. Darmesteter, *Le Zend-Avesta*, ii, Paris, 1892; *Mihir yasht*, pp. 441-480.

Amiran (Arm. *Mher*) has hardly anything to do with *Mithra* (*Mihr*, Arm. *Mehr*): there is nothing to justify us in analysing *Amiran* as *A-mihran* (-*A-mithran*), the Abkhasian prefix *a-* + *Mihr*—(*Mithra*). But if its analysis as *A-mihran* were correct, and if we could find some common features in the Georgian *Amiran* Saga, *Shah Nameh*'s legends and the Avesta *Mithra*-myths, there can also be found still more of other elements in the *Amiran* Saga, which are not to be traced back to Persian influence. Besides, the Persian religion after the founding of the Achæmenian empire was strongly influenced by Babylonian and Asia Minor religions. Even the gods supplanted each other. *Ahura-Mazda* has been identified with the Babylonian *Bēl*, *Mithra* with *Šamaš*, the Babylonian sun-god, resp. with the Asia Minor *Mēn*, the moon-god (*Mithra* with the horse), with *Attis*, *Anāhita* with the Asia Minor goddess *Kybele*, resp. the Babylonian *Ishtar*, etc.; in Greece, *Ahura-Mazda* with *Zeus*; *Mithra* with *Helios*, etc.¹ Astrology was appropriated by the Persian magi from the Babylonians,² and it still remains to be examined exactly, how much Babylonian resp. Asia Minor elements are contained in the Persian *Mithra* myths. In any case, the Georgian *Amiran* Sagas contain nothing Persian. And what might be considered as Grecian or Persian in these sagas, belongs much more to very old sources, from whence the influence on the Grecian *Prometheus* saga resp. the Persian *Mithra* legends might have originated. Some details in the cult of the Georgian *T'et'ri Giorgi* which remind us of *Mithra*, may also be traced back to the times when *Mithra*, himself, in the Pontus, was identical with *Mēn*, the moon-god, and the Georgian St. George is but the moon-god, as Javakhishvili has incontestably proved.³ Wesendonk's identification of the *Zaden* of the Georgian sources with *Yazata*, *Mithra*, the sun-god who was also worshipped in Iberia, is unacceptable, as we shall see below. Besides, the Georgians worshipped the sun as a deity, not of the male, but of the female sex.⁴ The spreading of Persian personal names containing god-names in old Georgia (as *Mirian*, *Mihran*, etc.)⁵ still does not prove that the respective deities had their cult in the country.

Finally a few words about the representations and descriptions of *Mithra*. *Mithra* was, again under the influence of foreign religions, not only represented as god of light—neither of the sun, nor the moon, nor the stars, but observing the world with his thousand ears and ten

¹ Fr. Cumont, *Les Mystères de Mithra*, Paris 1902, pp. 9 ff., 73, 93, 102 f.

² Ibid., p. 100 f.

³ *History*, i², pp. 43–56.

⁴ Javakhishvili, *History*, i², pp. 53 f.

⁵ It is remarkable that *Ormizd* (*Ohrmazd*) as a Georgian personal name is not to be found in Georgia of that period. Since the 16th century in Georgia, under the influence of the *Shah-Nameh*, the Persian personal names are very popular, although the people have remained Christian.

thousand eyes—and not only as god of fertility, giver of abundance, of posterity and multiplicator of cattle, god of vegetation, giver of water, etc., but also as the fighter against evil spirits, the fighter for the Good, the helper in a fight for the Good, and finally the war-god.¹ It is therefore comprehensible that some features in his representations and descriptions remind us of other war-gods, among them *Teshub*.² But these representations of *Mithra* diverge greatly from the description of *Armaz* in *The Life of St. Nino*. The *Armaz* described there bears little resemblance to the *Mithra* who holds holy twigs in his left hand and stretches out his right hand to King Antiochus I of Kommagene³; still less to the *Mithra* who kills the bull,⁴ and none at all to the *Mithra* portrayed on the handle of the Mtskhet'a vessel.⁵ Also the Georgian *samkhreni* or *samkharni* in our sources certainly signifies "shoulder-plates" (pl.) and not "shoulder-cover" (of the bull-killing *Mithra*) as Makalat'ia seems to think.⁶ The *Mithra* described in *Khorda-Avesta* is the only one which resembles the *Armaz* of our sources, but in spite of this we cannot consider *Armaz* to be the same god as *Mithra*, because it is absolutely impossible that the Persian *Mithra* religion, if it had become the official religion of Georgia, would have been in such a strong opposition to, and publicly manifested hostility against, the likewise Persian religion of the Magi (fire-worship)—as our sources record. We should have had to do here with quite a curious phenomenon, for it was the Magi themselves who, from the time of Achæmenides, after the contact of the Iranians with other peoples of the East, and under the influence of their religions, had contributed in greatest measure to the development of post-Zarathustrian Mazdaism.

Thus, *Armaz* remains for us a totally different deity also from] the god *Mithra*.

V

It is further related in *The Conversion of Georgia* that P'arnajom, the successor of King Mirvan (successor of Saurmag, who succeeded P'arnavaz), erected an idol to the god *Zaden* and built a castle on this spot.⁷ Which god, and whose god, was this *Zaden*? Marr thought that *Zaden* was none other than *yazata* of Avesta, pl. *yaztân* in

¹ Fr. Cumont, op. cit., pp. 3 f.

² Cf. the above quoted descriptions in *Khorda-Avesta*, and H. Gressmann, *Die orientalischen Religionen im hellenistisch-römischen Zeitalter*, Leipzig, 1930; p. 143, fig. 53, p. 149, fig. 56, etc.

³ H. Gressmann, op. cit., p. 143.

⁴ Ibid., p. 149.

⁵ *Bulletin du Musée de Géorgie*, iii, table viii.

⁶ Op. cit., p. 190.

⁷ Marr et Brière, op. cit., p. 570.

Pahlavi, in Persian *yazdān*, which means "the good deity", that is *Mithra*, *Mihra*, and then "god" in general. As we have already seen, Marr's opinion is shared by von Wesendonk¹ and Makalat'ia,² yet without either of them being able to give convincing proofs. Marr made the assertion that the Georgian (properly Persian) king's name *P'arnajom* was originally the epithet of *Zaden-Mithra* *χ'arənanušaštoma* "the highest brilliance of Mithra" (properly "the most sublime", "the most magnificent"³) and *P'arnajom*, the Georgian phonetic equivalent of this epithet.⁴ He maintained, also, that the Georgian king's name *P'arnavaz* (<*P'arnavazd*) was the Georgian form of the same epithet for *Ahura-Mazda* (without the final syllable *-ma*⁵). Now it is certainly true that the first component part of the name *P'arnavaz* and *P'arnajom*, *P'arna-* goes back to old Persian *χ'arəna-* ("glory", "brilliance", "sublimity", "majesty"), Persian *farnah-* (and it is also true that *hvar* "sun" is mentioned just in *The Life of St. Nino*: "This says the king of Persia, *Huara*, and the king of kings *Huaran-Huarray*," etc.⁶). But all this has nothing to do with the god *Zaden*.

Zaden, in our opinion, cannot be identified with *Mithra*, or have any connection with *yazdān*—at any rate we have no actual proof of it, but *Zaden* can be identified with the Asia Minor god *Sandon*, *Santas* (^d*Sa-an-ta-aš*, *ZDMG*, N.F., Bd. 1, Heft 2, pp. 216f.). *Sandon-Santas* (cf. Pauly-Wissowa: *Realencyclopädie der Klassischen Altertumswissenschaft*: *Σάνδης*, *Σάνδας*, *Σάνδων*) was, as is known, the god of vegetation, who was worshipped from Cilicia to Cappadocia and also in the west and south-west Asia Minor (by Lydians and others).⁷ That he was worshipped in Georgia as *Zaden*, we presume from the Georgian name *Zaden* (Luvian *Santas* of the Boghaz-köi texts = *Sandon* of Greek sources) and the characteristics of the deity given in *The Life of St. Nino* and by Leontius Mroveli. Marr denied the existence of *Zaden*-worship and of any *Zaden* idol in Mtskheta and considered the information concerning this god in the Georgian sources to be a fable arising from the Christian author's tendency to represent Georgian paganism as "horrible idolatry". But we can see in *The Life of St. Nino*, even admitting this tendency of the authors, quite clearly, what kind of deities *Armaz* and *Zaden* were. The existence of the idols of these gods and their cult in Mtskheta is no tale of the author's imagination; on the contrary, the "horrible idolatry" is described in our sources in such a way, that, apparently it actually existed in Georgia.

King Mirian says to St. Nino: "These are the gods who give

¹ Op. cit., p. 84.

² Cf. Chr. Bartholomæ, *Altiranisches Wörterbuch*.

³ Op. cit., p. 7.

⁴ p. 46.

⁵ Op. cit., pp. 184 ff.

⁶ Ibid., p. 5.

⁷ Götze, *Kleinasien*, p. 127.

luxuriant fruits and rule the world, who spread out the sun and give rain, who make the fruits of the Georgian soil to thrive—*Armaz* and *Zaden*, who explore everything that is hidden.”¹ Evidently they are: (1) the Subaraean god of Heaven, of light, of rain, of the air (*Armaz* =) *Teshub*; and (2) the Asia Minor (Luvian) god of fertility, of vegetation, (*Zaden* =) *Sandon-Santas*, which in the Hittite version of the text *KUB*, ix, 31 is rendered through the ideogram of Marduk.² To this Javakhishvili remarks that in the Georgian text the attributes mentioned are ascribed to both gods and that it is hardly possible to infer therefrom the respective character of each.³ Yet for us this information from our text is all the more interesting as both gods were represented by different peoples with many attributes common to them. For instance, by Babylonians and Assyrians *Adad* (= Hurritic *Teshub*) was esteemed not only as a weather-god and war-god, but also as (1) god of abundance,⁴ (2) *Marduk* of rain,⁵ (3) god of oracle,⁶ (4) ruler of the world,⁷ (5) judge of destinies,⁸ (6) god of harvest,⁹ etc. *Marduk* was also esteemed as (1) god of abundance,¹⁰ (2) lord of exorcism,¹¹ (3) lord of the springs,¹² (4) lord of the world,¹³ (5) creator of mankind¹⁴—epithets of which there is no end in Babylonian-Assyrian literature. *Marduk* (worshipped by the Babylonians as the great god, creator of the world, sun-god, etc.),¹⁵ was also esteemed as the god of vegetation (the Babylonians had a special god of vegetation—*Tamūz*), hence the epithets which he has in common with *Adad* (= Hurritic *Teshub*) and *Tamūz* (= Asia Minor *Attis*), and his ideogram for the rendering of the name of *Santas* in the above-mentioned Boghaz-köi text. The case is just the same in our Georgian text, where the attributes common to both gods, *Armaz* and *Zaden* are enumerated, though the special character of each of them could not

¹ *The Life of St. Nino*, p. 37; L. Mroveli, op. cit., p. 87.

² E. Forrer, *ZDMG*, N.F., i, Heft. 2, p. 216; *Boghaz-köi Studien*, v, p. 37.

³ *History*, i², p. 102.

⁴ *Hegallu* "abundance": *CT*, xxv, 17, 31; *bēl hegallī* "lord of abundance": *Codex Hammurabi*, xxvii, 64 ff.

⁵ *Marduk ša ru-un-nu*: *CT*, xxiv, 50, No. 47406, obv. 10.

⁶ *bēl-bēri*, "lord of the vision": Zimern, *Beiträge zur babylon. Religion*: *Šurpu*, iv, 73; *bēl iḫsi* "lord of wisdom": Virolleaud, *Astr. Chald.*, *Samaš*, xiv, 13.

⁷ *gugal šamē iršitīm*, "ruler of the heaven (and) earth", *KB*, iii, 1, p. 170; perhaps originally, "god of heaven"; cf. Ungnad., *ZDMG*, N.F. 10, p. 379.

⁸ *paris purussē ša kiššat nišē*, "who decides the destinies of entire mankind": Ebeling, *KARI*, No. 70, rev. 30-31.

⁹ *ša ušabši ašnan*, "who lets the crops thrive": King, *BBS*, ix, col. ii, 10.

¹⁰ *naḍin hegallī*, "the giver of abundance": King, *LH*, 94, 2-13.

¹¹ *bēl šipti*, "lord of exorcism": Craig, *ABRT*, i, 59.

¹² *bēl naḡbē šadī u tāmāti*, "lord of the springs of the mountain and sea": King, *Magic*, No. 12, 28.

¹³ *bēl elāti u šaplāti*, "lord of all that is above and of all that is below," *KB*, iii, 1, p. 184; *abkal kiššat šamē u iršitīm*, "autocrat of the whole heaven and earth": Craig, *ABRT*, i, 59, K. 8961, 11.

¹⁴ *banū tenišet gimri*, "creator of all mankind": King, *Magic*, No. 12, 33.

¹⁵ King, *The Seven Tablets of the Creation*.

fail to be recognized. But in another text the god of vegetation, namely the god of wine, is actually mentioned.

The Georgian translation of the Canons of the Sixth Ecumenical Council¹ contain the following remark by St. Euthymius Mt'adsmindeli: "The names of the destroyed heathen idols, which they (the Georgians) recognized as gods, of the male as well as of the female sex, are exterminated: *Dios* [sic!] and *Apolos* [sic!] and *Artemis* and *Bochi*² and *Gatsi* and *Badagon* and *Armaz* and the name of the horrible *Dionysos* which is invoked at the pressing of the grapes. . . . All that is devilish and was exterminated by the Christians." It is striking here that the name *Zaden* is not mentioned by Euthymius. But this name could not have been unknown to the great writer, who knew Georgian literature too well, and it is to be admitted that he used the Greek name *Dionysos* for *Zaden*, as he did in the case of other gods—*Dios*, *Apolos*, *Artemis*, for only *Zaden* can be identified here with *Dionysos*, according to his attributes as god of vegetation. Also *Sandon* is portrayed in "Hittite" dress, with a bunch of grapes in his right and a sheaf of corn in his left hand, on the rock near Ibriz.³

Armaz and *Zaden*, as our sources show, were worshipped not only as the weather-god resp. god of vegetation, but both were esteemed as gods of wisdom, the oracle-gods in Georgia, as *Adad* and *Marduk* were in Babylonia.⁴ Here we may point to one more attribute of *Armaz*: "the Chaldean goddess *It'rujan* and this our god *Armaz* are complete enemies to each other, for once *Armaz* raised up the sea against her and now she has taken her revenge and inflicted this (that is, the destruction of his idol) on him," said King Mirian to St. Nino,⁵ through whose prayer at the time of the *Armaz*-feast in Mtskheta, the idols were destroyed. This reminds us of *Adad*, the ruler of the elements, also of the sea, as he is characterized in Sumerian and Babylonian-Assyrian texts: *ša abūbi* "the (god) of the flood"⁶; *esag-gal abzu* "the great prince of the water depths"⁷; *bēl abūbi*, "the lord of the flood"⁸; *Adad ša māti: ša tāmti namriri ša birqi*, "Adad of the country: of the sea, of (the flood of) light, of the lightning"⁹; *mu-ut-tab-bil šamē šadē ta-ma-a-ti*, "the destroyer of heavens, mountains and seas"¹⁰; *Adad tāmta irahhis*, "Adad will

¹ Ed. Khakhanashvili, p. 113; Javakhishvili, *History*, i², p. 80.

² Nothing exact is known of this god.

³ H. Gressmann, *op. cit.*, p. 103, fig. 43 and p. 104.

⁴ Concerning *Sandon* (identified with *Marduk* in the Hittite text mentioned)—the War-god, cf. Höfer in Roscher's *Mytholog. Lexikon*, iv, 330, 28; and concerning *Sandon*, the sun, cf. A. Jeremias, *Allgemeine Religionsgeschichte*, 1918, p. 114.

⁵ *The Life of St. Nino*, p. 24.

⁶ *CT.*, xxiv, 40, 48.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 16, 38; 29, 85.

⁸ King, *Magic*, 21, rev. 80.

⁹ Virolleaud, *Astr. Chald.*, *Adad*, xvii, 34.

¹⁰ King, *Magic*, 21, rev. 80.

overflow the sea, etc." ¹. It is to this attribute of the weather-god, presumably, to which Mirian refers, when he relates that *Armaz* had once raised the sea against the goddess It'rujan, his foe, for in Babylonia the same attributes were assigned to this god as in other countries, although we learn much less about the matter in the literature of other peoples than in that of the Babylonian. ²

That the idols of *Armaz* and *Zaden* were erected near the city of Mtskhet'a, and that their cult was actually practised, is shown by the following passage from *The Life of St. Nino*: "Now there were in this land of K'art'li two mountains, and on these mountains two idols, *Armaz* and *Zaden*, from which arose the evil smell of thousands of first-born children, whom their parents brought as sacrifices—(these) *Armaz* and *Zaden*." ³ The custom, spread throughout Syria and Palestine, of sacrificing to the gods the first fruits of the harvest, and also the first-born of man and beast—a custom which might have come from Asia Minor to Georgia—is actually stated in our source, and we have no ground for doubting the truth of this information from the Georgian source. Also Strabo described the bringing of human offerings to the moon-god in Caucasian Albania, which embraced one part of Eastern Georgia. ⁴ This custom, probably Semitic in origin, of sacrificing to the deity an adolescent son, especially a first-born, was native with the Canaan tribes (with Carthaginians still at the end of the fourth century), ⁵ and apparently its influence spread to Iran, as we learn from Herodotus' ⁶ account of the Magi in Thrace, who buried alive nine native boys and nine girls. ⁷ It seems to have been native also in Georgia, as Strabo and the national sources show. At any rate it is in no way a phantasy of a Georgian writer, as Marr would have it.

In *The Life of John Zedazneli*, it is related that "formerly a tower was erected by the heathen on this mountain (of Zedazeni). An altar stood there which was used for the dreadful sacrifices to horrible devils offered by awful men, wickedly misguided by them" (= the

¹ Virolleaud, *Astr. Chald., Sin.*, xxv, 48.

² In the Armenian version of *The Life of St. Nino*, an abbreviated translation from Georgian, the attributes of *Armaz* and *Zaden* are assigned to other gods (*Gayim* and *Gatsim*), while the translator leaves out *Armaz* and *Zaden* (Cf. Conybeare, op. cit., pp. 80 f.).

³ p. 30.

⁴ XI, iv, 7.

⁵ Ed. Meyer, *Geschichte*, i², § 349.

⁶ Herodotus, vii, 114.

⁷ Fr. Spiegel remarks concerning this, and with reason, that there is either a misunderstanding here, or we have to do with the influence on Iran of a strange cult, because human sacrifice is incompatible with the character of Persian religion and it also contradicts all that Herodotus states elsewhere about this religion (*Eränische Altertumskunde*, iii, p. 593). Perhaps the offering of sacrifice on the heights may also be traced back to strange, probably Asia Minor influence (Herod., i, 131; Strabo, xv, C. 732).

devils).¹ Here we have the same true tradition as in *The Life of St. Nino* where the author makes St. Nino say to the women who have awakened from their dream of the fall of the mountains near Mtskheta and the flooding of the rivers Mtkwari and Aragvi: "... the mountains of unbelief in Georgia are now destroyed and the water (of the rivers) which is still, is the blood of the children sacrificed to the devils, which has ceased to flow."²

The converted King Mirian says: "I am the thirty-sixth king in Georgia from the (first) appearance of our fathers to my own day. And for the horrible idols they (our fathers) killed [word for word—devoured] their children and the innocent people of the country, and some of our fathers mowed down their children like hay, as to please the idols." "And especially on these two mountains of *Armaz* and *Zaden*, whose stones even are impregnated with the blood of little ones! And these mountains truly deserve to be destroyed by the fire of the wrath of God!"³

Leontius Mroveli also tells that King Rev (A.D. 186–213) "during his reign no longer allowed anyone in Georgia to offer up children, for children were sacrificed formerly. Instead, he ordered them to sacrifice sheep and cows. And therefore he received the name of 'Rev the Just'."⁴

The memory of human sacrifice must have remained alive with the Georgians long after they had embraced Christianity, seeing that the later Christian authors were able to give such a description of this custom several centuries after its disappearance.

VI

Unfortunately the Georgian sources report very little about the deities *Gatsi* and *Ga* or *Gaim*, although even these gods are considered as national deities. According to *The Conversion of Georgia*, Alexander the Great brought to Georgia *Azo*, the son of the king of *Aran-K'art'li* (var. *Arian-K'art'li*), made him king, and gave him Mtskheta for his royal seat. *Azo* then went to his father in *Aran* or *Arian-K'art'li* and brought back with him eight families and ten families of his fellow-tribesmen, and took his seat in old Mtskheta. He had with him the idols *Gatsi* and *Gaim*, which he worshipped as gods.⁵—"And on the right of him (that is *Armaz*) stood a golden idol, and his name was *Gatsi*, and on the left a silver idol by the name of *Ga*, which your fathers had worshipped as gods in *Arian-K'art'li*,"

¹ *The Georgian Paradise* (in Georgian), ed. Sabinin, Tiflis, 1882, p. 199.

² pp. 45 f.

⁴ Op. cit., p. 43.

³ Ibid., p. 68.

⁵ Marr and Brière, op. cit., p. 570.

St. Nino tells her listeners.¹ King Mirian calls them "old gods of our fathers *Gatsi* and *Ga*."² Human sacrifice was also offered to these deities, for *The Life of St. Nino* relates: "There were also in Georgia other royal idols (*θεοὶ βασιλῆων*) *Gatsi* and *Ga*. And a prince's son was offered to them, who was burnt by fire and his ashes strewn on the head of the idol."³

Where lay this land of *Aran* or *Arian-K'art'li*? Is *Aran* to be identified with *Ἀράνη* of Ptolemy⁴—a district of old Armenia Minor⁵—and have we to do here, in our Georgian source, with amalgamation of the legends of Alexander-romance with the obscure remembrance of the immigration of the Georgians from Asia Minor to Caucasia? Without doubt the reference is to the old home of those gods, who were brought by their worshippers to the Caucasian K'art'li, that is, to Georgia, for these gods were "old gods of the fathers" who had them in "Ar(i)an-Georgia". The bringing of the eight families and the ten families of his fellow tribesmen by *Azo*, the "first king" of Georgia, points also to the immigration of the chief tribe of the Georgian nation, the K'art'ians to Caucasia. Or has *Ar(i)an*, perhaps, a connection with the name of the city of *Arinna* which lay to the north of the Hatti country,⁶ and whose gods were invoked *ha-at-ti-li*, that is in proto-Hattian?⁷ A satisfactory answer to these questions, either affirmative or negative, we can only expect from Hittitological researches, but meanwhile we may be permitted to make some remarks on the explanation of this "Ar(i)an-K'art'ian" god-name which the Georgian sources have preserved.

Marr was right in identifying the name *Gatsi* with the semitized god-name '*Ate*.'⁸ In the Greek *Ἀράργατος* we have '*Ate*' as the second component of the word. Also in a variant of *The Life of St. Nino* (MSS. No. 39 in the "Asiatic Museum"), Marr found *Gati* instead of *Gatsi*,⁹ but it is very likely that this form of the god-name is simply a mistake in writing by the copyist. This name '*Ate*', said Marr, is indeed the name of a mythical personality mentioned in Melitos' *Apology*,¹⁰ who was worshipped in Adiabene, Syria.¹¹ *Ga*, too, according to Marr, is a semitic god-name or an epithet which signifies "exalted".¹²

¹ *Life of St. Nino*, p. 21.

² *Ibid.*, p. 37.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

⁴ V, 6, 18.

⁵ N. Adontz, *Armenia in the Time of Justinian* (in Russian), pp. 74, 82.

⁶ A. Götze, *Kleinasien*, p. 127.

⁷ E. Forrer, *ZDMG*, N.F., 1, 1922, pp. 192 ff.

⁸ *Op. cit.*, p. 22; cf. Vogué, *Syrie Centrale, Inscript. sémit.*, Paris, 1868-1877, p. 10; Nöldeke, *ZDMG*, 1870 (24), p. 92.

⁹ *Op. cit.*, p. 23.

¹⁰ Cf. Cureton, *Spicilegium Syriacum*, London, 1855, p. 44.

¹¹ Marr, *op. cit.*, p. 22; see also Ed. Meyer, *Geschichte*, 1³, § 487.

¹² Cf. Levy, *ZDMG*, 1869 (23), p. 320; Vogué, *Inscript. sémit.*, tab. 14, No. 3; Halévy, *Revue des Etudes Juives*, 1886 (12), p. 157, resp. Nöldeke, *ZDMG*, 1870 (24), p. 97, note 1; also Gildemeister, *ZDMG*, 1868 (22), p. 152, etc.

But for him only the name is of importance which has been preserved in Syrian Christian literature, and which, together with the other god-name 'Ate under the form *Gatsi*, the Georgian author versed in Syrian, had taken and made of them two national Georgian pagan gods.¹ Marr explains the form *Gaim* as being the Hebrew plural of *Ga* with *-im*.² Since the translations (Grecian, Armenian, and Georgian) from Hebrew have often retained the Hebrew plural sign, the Georgian author, too, ignorant of Hebrew, might have affixed this plural sign *-im* to the name *Ga*,³ as for instance the Armenian translator of *The Life of St. Nino* did with both names *Gatsi* and *Ga* when he rendered them in Armenian as *Gats-im* and *Gay-im*.⁴

But the problem, is not so easy to solve as Marr thought. Why the Georgian author versed in Syrian, who found in a Syrian book a semitized god-name resp. an epithet of another Semitic god, should have made of them national Georgian deities is quite incomprehensible to us. The Aramaic god-name 'Ate was certainly not taken out of Melito's book by a Georgian author, and introduced into the Georgian heathen Pantheon as *Gats-i* or *Gat-i*. 'Ate was indeed a Syrian deity, but originally an Asia Minor god, who was worshipped in Cilicia, Phrygia, Lydia, etc., known to Greek and Roman writers as *Attis*—a deity of the same nature as *Adonis* of Biblos and *Tamūz* of Babylon—who was admitted in the West-Semitic Pantheon as 'Ate. The Greek 'Αράπυρις is composed, as is known, of 'Arap and γαρις, Aramaic 'Atar-'Ate, which means "the goddess", "the Ishtar" (the beloved) of 'Ate, of Γάρις.⁵ From Asia Minor the cult of 'Ate must have spread all over Syria, and it is also very probable that this god was worshipped by the Georgian tribe of K'art'ians in their Asia Minor home, and followed them to Caucasian Georgia, and to this the accounts in our source seem to point. Also the name *Ga* of the Georgian sources has no connection at all with the component *Ga* of the proper names found in the above-cited Semitic inscriptions. Such a deity is not known in the Semitic Pantheon with certainty. Some of the scholars, as, for instance, Gildemeister and Nöldeke (see the quotations above) denied the existence of such a deity and considered the name to be an epithet. It is also improbable that *-im* of the Georgian *Ga-im* is the Hebrew plural ending, as Marr thought. We have a variant for *Ga(im)*—*Gatsay*,⁶ and perhaps the name *Gaimaa* [sic f] in Leontius Mroveli's work⁷ is the complete, uncorrupted form of the abbreviated *Gaim*: *Gaimay*. In the Moscow edition of the Georgian Bible, 1 Kings

¹ Op. cit., pp. 19–23.

² Marr, op. cit., pp. 21–22.

³ Also Γάρη: cf. Nöldeke, *ZDMG*, 1870 (24), pp. 92, 109.

⁴ The *Dchelishi*—variant of the *Life of St. Nino*; cf. Javakhishvili, *History*, i², p. 92.

⁵ Cf. 1 Sam. vii, 4.

⁶ Conybeare, op. cit., p. 81.

⁷ Op. cit., p. 71.

vii, 3, 4, *Ga* stands as the equivalent of Astarte (Ishtar), as Marr himself has stated.¹ Now if we may interpret *Gatsay* as the feminine form of *Gatsi*,² then *Gaim* resp. *Gaima(y)* seems to be a compound word: *Gay-ma*. In this *-ma* we might have the name of the goddess of the Cataonian resp. Pontic Comana *Mā*, which is an Asia Minor pet-name for "mother". Then *Gay-Ma* would mean "Gay, the mother" and *Gay-ma(y)* would correspond exactly with the Greek *Γημήτηρ* "earth mother", Georgian *deda-midsa*, which now simply means "earth", but which was formerly the name of the Earth-goddess (Georgian highlanders still call her *adgilis deda*—"mother of the place = of the soil"). This is all the more remarkable as the first part *Δη* of *Γημήτηρ* seems to be an Asianic word signifying "earth" and that the Greek *γαῖα*, *γῆ* which is hardly to be explained as an Indo-European word, seems to be connected with *δη*.³

So we might have in *Gats-i* resp. *Gat-i* and *Ga* resp. *Gaima(y)*⁴ and *Gatsay*,⁵ the Asia Minor *Attis* and *Mā*, "father" and "mother",⁶ which under different names were worshipped in many countries of Western Asia: *Adonis* and *Aphrodite* or *Persephone* in Greek mythology; *Attis* and *Kybele*, the parallel figure of which is *Mā*, in Asia Minor; *Attis* ('*Ate*) and *Atargatis* ('*Atar-Ale* = Ishtar of Attis), abbreviated *Derceto*, called *Dea Syria* in Latin, in Syria; *Tamūz* and *Ishtar* in Babylonia, which also greatly resemble the Egyptian *Ostris* and *Isis*—and the legends, cults and mysteries, and representations of which are known to us through the oldest inscriptions, through Greek and Latin literature, pagan and Christian, and through archaeological discoveries.⁷

As goddesses of love and fertility, of sexual life—in Asia Minor also of perverse love—*Ishtar*, *Kybele*, *Mā*, etc., were looked upon as the chosen brides of the Nature gods *Tamūz*, *Attis*, etc. Hence the complaint of the goddesses over the death of their beloved ones, their death symbolizing the periodic dying away of Nature in winter, and hence their joy over the resurrection of the dead gods, which also happens periodically in spring, with feasts which followed this joy.

As gods of Nature *Tamūz*, *Attis*, etc., were gods of vegetation

¹ Op. cit., p. 21.

² *Gatsi* has no connection whatever with the Georgian word *hatsi*—man, person. Many have suggested this connection because they could find no other.

³ Cf. Javakhishvili, *History*, i³, pp. 85 f.; O. Gruppe, *Griechische Mythologie*, pp. 1164 f.

⁴ *Gatsim* in the Armenian version of *The Life of St. Nino* is clearly an analogous form of *Gayim*.

⁵ *Gatsay* is a quite un-Georgian formation of the feminine gender, and may be due to Greek influence.

⁶ See J. Friedrich, *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung*, 1923, col. 217.

⁷ Cf. Ed. Meyer, *Geschichte*, i³, 470, 480, 485, 487; H. Hepding, *Attis, seine Mythen und sein Kult*, 1903; H. Gressmann, *Die orientalischen Religionen im hellenistisch-römischen Zeitalter*, 1930, §§ 2, 3, 5, 6, 7; H. Zimmern, *KAT*, *Tamūz*, etc.

and also parallel figures to the sun deities; hence *Sandon* = *Marduk*, *Attis* = *Sandon*, in Asia Minor, etc. But, unfortunately, our old Georgian sources contain no more information about these gods and their chosen brides than that their names were *Gats-i* and *Ga* and that they were the "old gods" of *Ar(i)an K'art'li*, that is, of the original home of the K'art'ian tribe of the Georgian nation.¹

VII

We have another deity still to consider here, which, indeed, is not mentioned in our texts, but is worshipped, even to-day, by the Abkhazians, and seems to be of Asia Minor origin—the goddess *Ašahara* or *Azahara*, who in our estimation is to be looked upon as the well-known Asia Minor goddess *Išhara*. This goddess is often mentioned in the Boghaz-köi texts² and was invoked in the Hurritic tongue. From earliest times she was also worshipped in Babylonia and Assyria, and an Elamite Naram-Sin inscription mentions her under the name of *Ašhara*.³

The similarity of the names *Išhara* resp. *Ašhara* with *Ašahara* resp. *Azahara*, is not the only striking thing here, but also the similarity in the nature of the Asia Minor goddess with the Abkhasian goddess. Abkhasians esteemed *Aš/žahara* as the protecting goddess of the homestead, of the family. In Abkhasia, the father of a family prays *Aš/žahara* to protect his son's bride and the newly founded family. Georgian mountain-tribes still honour "the angel of the house", "the mother of the place," and the cult of these goddesses goes back to the earliest times, as we learn from the note in the Georgian translation of the Decisions of the Antioch Ecumenical Council: "We have also heard, that in Armenian and Georgian countries . . . they call the tempters (devils) 'angels of the house' and serve them . . . and that they serve the invisibles (spirits) in the house or outside in the fields."⁴ Her epithets point to exactly the same character of the goddess *Išhara*, which we learn from Babylonian-Assyrian literature: *Iš-ša-ra ummu rim-ni-tum ša nišē*, "Išhara, the merciful mother of mankind,"⁵ *qaišat napišti*, "the giver of Life,"⁶ *bēlit taṭmē*, "the mistress of the dwelling-place," etc.⁷

¹ The name *Kybele* is perhaps to be identified with the Georgian *Kopala*, *Kopale*. *Kopala* is worshipped by the Georgian mountain-tribes (in Eastern and Western Georgia) as a male deity and indeed he is identified sometimes with St. George (the moon-god), and sometimes with *Kviria* ("manager of the earth"). Sometimes also he is called the god of hunting. But it is to be remarked that he is considered to be a great hater of women (cf. Javakhishvili, *History*, i², pp. 90 f.) which surely points to some kind of sexual perversity connected with the cults of Asia Minor.

² *Iš-ša-ra-aš*, cf. Forrer, *ZDMG*, 1922, p. 192.

³ Scheil, *Délégation Sc. en Perse*, xi (textes élamites-anzanites), pp. 1 ff.; cf. also Ed. Meyer, *Geschichte* i², §§ 402a, 433; p. 607.

⁴ Javakhishvili, *History* i², p. 82.

⁵ King, *Magic*, 7, rev. 37.

⁶ King, *Magic*, 57, 2.

⁷ IV R 59, col. iv, 1.

Experts of the Abkhasian language derive the word *Ašahara* from *aša*, "blood," "seed," "family," and *hara*, "protection," "rule."¹ If this etymology were correct,² we should be justified in believing that the original home of the Abkhasians, like that of the Georgians, was in Asia Minor, and that the cult of the goddess *Išhara*, even from earliest times, was spread as far south as Babylonia and Elam, and that later, with the immigration of the Abkhasians to Caucasia, it spread in the north.

VIII

A few words still about the goddesses who are mentioned in the old Georgian sources, but whose names do not appear to be of Asia Minor origin—*Ainina* and *Danina*. Unfortunately the texts report very little about these deities. *The Conversion of Georgia* only mentions that the idol of *Ainina* was erected by King Saurmag "on the road", and the idol of *Danina* by King Mirvan "on the road, opposite to it", near Mtskhet'a.³ Leontius Mroveli⁴ says that King Saurmag erected the idols of both goddesses *Ainina* and *Danina*⁵ on the Mtskhet'a road. Can this be a reference to the introduction of the cult of the Iranian *Anāhita* by the successors resp. the successor of the King P'arnavaz in Georgia? Certainly not, in so far as the introduction is concerned, for the cult of the goddesses probably existed before the erection of their idols by the Kings. But it is very probable that we have here to do not with *Anāhita*, but with two names of the Sumerian *Ishtar*: *Innina* and *Ni/ana* whose cult had also invaded other lands and who had been merged with local figures of *Ishtar*.

In the original Georgian texts probably stood not *Ainina* and (Georg. copula *da*) *Danina* resp. *Danana*, but *Ainina* and *Nina* resp. *Nana* (that is, in Georgian *Ainina da Ni/ana*). A later copyist wrote *da* twice (copula "and"), and thus the mis-spelled name *Dani/ana*⁶ has been introduced in historical literature.

In Persia, *Nana* was merged with *Anāhita* (originally a Persian water-goddess). Armenia (particularly Akilisene) was the chief seat of the cult of *Anahid* and *Nana*, who, like *Ishtar* in Babylon, was

¹ Javakhishvili, *History*, I², p. 83.

² There is no connection, indeed, between *Išhara* and the Armenian *Ašharh* "soil", derived from the Persian *ṣāthra* = "rule" "realm" (cf. Javakhishvili, *History*, I², p. 95.).

³ Marr et Brière, op. cit. p. 570.

⁴ Op. cit. p. 23.

⁵ In the Armenian Chronicle *Dadana* instead of *Danana* (cf. Brosset, op. cit., p. 10).

⁶ Cf. also N. Marr, op. cit. p. 9.

worshipped as goddess of war and identified with the Venus star; and this cult was originally not Iranian, but resembled that of Babylonian and Asia Minor. In Asia Minor, *Anāhita* and her cult merged with the various figures of mother-gods and their cults.¹ The Sumerian *Ištar* was called *Ninni* (CT, xxiv, 33, K. 4349, obv. col. v, 4, etc.), *Irni* (CT, xxv, 17, K. 2100, obv. col. ii, 11), *Nanā* (Dhorme, *Choix de Textes*, etc., xviii, rev. 16), *Nina* (Thureau-Dangin, *SAK*, p. 11 and *Gudea Cyl. A.*, xx, 16, etc.), *Innana* (CT., xxv, 30, K. 2109, etc., rev. col. i, 14), *Irmini* (King, *Seven Tablets of the Creation*, append. v, 51), *Innana* (IVR², 4, col. iii, 27), etc., and in the Sumerian-Babylonian religious and other kinds of literature, she is honoured with countless epithets such as "mistress of battle" (war-goddess), "goddess of morning" and "goddess of evening", "(the star) *Dilbat* = *Ištar*, mistress of the lands," "the morning which opens the way" (Venus star), "mistress of love," "creatress of mankind," "she who lets grow the young green" (goddess of vegetation), "mistress of the mountains and of the seas," goddess of the water and the fish, etc.

As already conjectured, we probably have the Sumerian names of the goddess in the Georgian *Ainina* and *Ni/ana* (instead of *Dani/ana*) which are two forms of one and the same deity, whose idols were placed opposite each other on the road, and whose cult resembled probably the Sumerian-Babylonian resp. the Asia Minor-Armenian cult of *Ištar*. It is to be observed here that *nana*, *nanina* of the Georgian lullabies, and also *arnani*, *nani*, etc. were most probably once invocations of these goddesses. The feminine names *Nina/o* and *Nana* which were largely used in Georgia, and still are, have hardly any connection with the name of the goddess. These names of women are Asia Minor pet-names, whereas the names of the goddesses *Ainina* and *Nina* seem to be Sumerian names for *Ištar*, and point to the existence of the cult of *Ištar* in Georgia, which only could come to this country from Babylonia through Asia Minor.

IX

Finally, which deity was the Chaldean goddess *It'rujan* who, as we have seen above, is mentioned in our sources as being opposed to *Armaz*. Marr correctly recognized in *It'ru*—the first part of the word *It'rujan*, the Georgian pronunciation of the Syriac *'esthru-(tha)* (= *Ishtar*). But his explanation of the second part *-jan*, of *It'rujan*,

¹ Cf. Windischmann, *Die persische Anahita*, etc., *Abh. der phil.-philol. Cl. der Königl. Bayer. Ak. d. Wiss.*, viii, 1858, pp. 87-128; O. G. von Wesendonk, *Das Weltbild der Iranier*, pp. 119, 123, 145 ff.

is certainly wrong. According to him, *-jan* is connected with the Syrian word of feminine gender *geniatha* "idol". It is true, of course, that in Georgian the foreign sound *g* becomes *j*, as in New Syriac (for instance, Georg. *P'rangi* > *P'ranji*, "Frank," "French," "European," etc.). This word *Geniatha* is also used several times in the Syriac version of the Scripture, not just in the sense of idol, in general, but in that of the idol of Astarte.¹ From these elements, Syr. *'esthru-(tha)* and *genia-(tha)* (without the ending), the Georgian author must have made the goddess *It'rujan*.² But the Georgian *It'rujan* can hardly be explained in this way. It cannot mean "Idol of Astarte", as Marr thought, for a construction like *'esthru-genia* is impossible in Syriac, and impossible also is *'esthrutha geniatha* "Astarte of the idol (of Astarte)," which has no sense. Besides, such a god-name is unknown in Syria, or in any other Semitic country, and the wonderful ability which Marr ascribed to our Georgian authors for making gods from pure words cannot possibly be recognized.

The name *It'rujan*, in our opinion, is to be explained thus: It is the Georgian pronunciation of the name of the Aramaic goddess *'Atar-šamain* [= Assy. *Ištar* (*ša*)*šamē*], "goddess of the Heaven," "heaven-goddess" (the deity of the heavens, male sex, was called *Ba'al-šamain* by the Canaanites),³ which in the Assyrian-Babylonian literature is also called "stirrer-up of the sea" and "overwhelmer of the mountains".⁴ This *'Atar-šamain* is rendered as *It'rushana* in a passage of *The Life of St. Nino*: "this *Armaz* and the Chaldean goddess (in the text 'God', for in Georgian *ghmeri*'i means both 'god' and 'goddess') *It'rushana* are complete enemies to each other," King Mirian says to St. Nino.⁵ And *It'rushana* is certainly the form which, phonetically, is still nearer to *'Atar-šamain* than *It'rujan*. As it is to be seen from *The Life of St. Nino*, the might and greatness of the Aramaic goddess of heaven, *'Atar-šamain*, were well-known in Georgia, for the Georgian explanation of the destruction of the idol of *Armaz* was as follows: "Once our god *Armaz* raised the sea against her, and now she has taken her revenge and has let this (that is, the destruction of his idol) happen to him."⁶ Being a foreign Chaldean goddess, an enemy of the Georgian national god *Armaz*, the one who destroyed his idol, *It'rujan* probably had neither idol nor cult in Georgia and perhaps we have in this rivalry between *Armaz* and *It'rujan* an echo of the resistance which the native Georgian paganism,

¹ Cf. ZDMG, 29, p. 111.

² Marr, op. cit., pp. 25-28; p. 27, note 2.

³ Cf. Ed. Meyer, *Geschichte*, 1¹, § 348.

⁴ Cf., for instance, King, *The Annals of the Kings of Assyria*, 1, pp. 206 ff., 3, 4.

⁵ p. 37.

⁶ p. 24.

or what was recognized as such, made against the gods who invaded Georgia from foreign countries.¹

X

In connection with the worship of gods of vegetation, we must direct our attention to tree-worship and pillar-worship, the existence of which in Georgia we see quite clearly in our sources. Indeed, the accounts of the wonderful and miraculous trees and pillars given in *The Life of St. Nino* are not stories purely imagined by the authors, but are based on a good tradition which makes it possible to connect the old Georgian cult of trees and pillars with similar cults practised in Asia Minor and other countries.

When King Mirian decided to build a church, he asked St. Nino: "Where shall I build the temple to God?" St. Nino answered: "In that place where the sovereigns think good." And the King said: "I will not spare the royal garden, nor the height of the pine-trees, nor the fruitfulness of the vines and the perfume of the flowers, but in it I will build for my prayers a temple which shall last for eternity. . . ." "And wood was brought and they began to build. And they felled a pine and made a pillar of it, and at its roots the foundation of the church was laid." Now the largest of the seven pillars made was so heavy that it could not be raised, even by a great number of men. Then, surely in answer to the prayer of St. Nino, it was raised up by a heavenly youth and carried heavenward. And they saw how the pillar descended in the form of a column of fire . . . and how, in coming down, it stood still twelve ells from the ground and (then) slowly rested on its own cut surface." On the following day the king saw a great light in his garden and everybody saw that "the marvellous, light-radiating pillar had descended as if it were standing in its place on its stump, and had firmly fixed itself in position without ever having been touched by human hand."²

Naturally, this pillar performed many miracles in the king's garden, where the church was to be built. Hence the name "the living pillar," which was later given to the Cathedral of Mtskheta.

Surely this is a valuable testimony of pillar-worship in old Georgia—a cult which has been investigated by A. Evans on the

¹ Our explanation of the name *Ii'rujan* refutes that given by Brosset (*Histoire de la Géorgie*, i, p. 102, n. 2) and, after him, by Conybeare and Wardrop (*The Life of St. Nino*, p. 74, n. 1), who identified it with *Xisuthros*. The latter is indeed *Zi-à-sut-ra* (cf. Br. Meissner, *Babylonien und Assyrien*, ii, p. 114), the Sumerian name of the Babylonian *Ut-napištim* ("Noah" of the Gilgamesh Epic), which has no connection at all with the Aramaic goddess of heaven *Atar-samain*.

² Cf. *The Life of St. Nino*, pp. 44-49; Leontius Mroveli, op. cit. pp. 92-96; cf. also A. Evans, op. cit. p. 145; Z. Avalishvili, *From the time of the Crusaders* (in Georgian), Paris, 1927, p. 28, § 9, note to the § 9, p. 38.

Islands of the Ægean Sea, in Greece, etc., and which apparently found its way into these countries from Asia Minor.

Concerning the erection of the "venerable cross" in Mtskhet'a, our texts tell the following stories which clearly point to tree-worship in old Georgia: "When the tree was felled (for the making) of the reverend and victorious cross, ten times ten men carried it upright, with its twigs and its leaves on, and brought it into the town, the people wondered at it because it had green colour and the leaves in early spring-time, when every tree is still dry. This one had no dead leaves at all and was sweet-smelling and beautiful to look at. Then they placed it upright on its roots at the south door of the church. And a light wind blew from the side of the river and shook the leaves and moved the twigs of the tree. Beautiful it was to look at and sweet-smelling, as we know from report of the aloe tree. This tree we felled on 25th March, on Friday, and it remained thus for thirty-seven days. And its leaves did not change but remained like those of a tree which has its roots near the source of a spring, until all the trees of the wood were clothed with leaves and adorned with blossoms. Then on 1st May, these crosses were made, and on the 7th of the same month they were erected, receiving the laying-on of hands from the king, amidst the rejoicing and great zeal of the whole city."¹ And with the same jubilation crosses were erected in many other places in accordance with God's desire.²

Still more interesting, perhaps, is the following passage from *The Life of St. Nino*, where King Mirian relates: "When I was informed about the erection (of the cross) I sent the carpenters out to look for a tree. How they had found a tree standing alone, growing on a rock, untouched by human hand, and how they had heard from hunters of the miraculous power of this tree, that a stag, wounded by an arrow, had run to the hill where the tree was standing, and had rapidly eaten seeds fallen from the tree, and had saved himself from death—all that they reported to me, and I was astounded. Therefore I had the tree felled, and three crosses made out of it,"³ etc. Leontius Mroveli gives the following: "At the time when the king and queen, their children and all the people were baptized, there stood a tree on a place, on an inaccessible rock. And this tree was beautiful and very sweet-smelling. The marvellous thing about this tree was, that a wild animal, wounded by an arrow, came (to it) and ate its leaves or its fallen seeds, and thus saved its life, although it had been mortally wounded. The former pagans thought this miraculous, and they told Bishop John about this tree." The bishop saw in it a sign

¹ *The Life of St. Nino*, pp. 55 f.; L. Mroveli, op. cit. p. 101.

² L. Mroveli, op. cit. pp. 102 f., and *The Life of St. Nino*, ibid.

³ p. 69.

from God and decided to have "the venerable cross" made out of it. Then the king's son Rev, the bishop himself, and other people, went and felled the tree and brought it to Mtskhet'a."¹

If we now compare these details from the Georgian sources with what we learn of the Asia Minor tree- and pillar-worship in the accounts of Greek and Roman authors, we shall see that without doubt a connection exists between the customs of Asia Minor and those described by the Georgian authors. The tradition preserved in the Georgian stories appears to be an echo of the most ancient pagan cult of Asia Minor.

In Asia Minor and northern Syria, indeed, every large tree, especially a tree standing alone on a hill or a rock, was the seat of a deity and possessed miraculous power, particularly healing power. On its twigs people used to hang offerings, etc., and similar representations and customs are to be found in Georgia, which are to be traced back to the old tree-worship.²

Naturally, the deity with his seat in a tree, was, in Asia Minor, the god of vegetation—Sandon, resp. Attis. From the seventh century B.C. to the end of the Roman Empire this cult is to be found in different countries of Asia Minor, in Greece, Rome, etc. In Hierapolis the Attis feast took place in early spring. Large trees were felled and erected on the sacred places and sheep, goats, birds, drapery and ornaments were hung on their branches, and then burnt with great jubilation.³ According to another account, the pine-tree, which represented the corpse of the dead Attis, was burnt, together with a picture of the dead god, a year later.⁴ Similar feasts in spring-time were celebrated also in Phrygia,⁵ Greece (Attika),⁶ and Rome.⁷ Also the pyre feast to the Cilician god of vegetation, Sandon, who, sitting in the tree, is engraved on Tarsus coins of the time of the Seleucids and the Roman Emperors, is well-known.⁸

Finally, the cult of the deities of vegetation in Asia Minor may be compared with that of the Egyptian god Osiris. In the city of Busiris they erected a large tree which was supposed to represent the spine of Osiris, etc.⁹ Remains of the pagan cults of the deities of

¹ Op. cit. pp. 100 f., after which follows the above-quoted account of the entrance into the town of the wonderful tree.

² Tree-worship was also practised by Egyptian and Semitic peoples (cf. Ed. Meyer, *Geschichte*, I⁵, §§ 180, 182 f., resp. §§ 343, 347 f.), but not originally by the Aryans (ibid., § 582).

³ Lucian, *Dea Syria*, 49.

⁴ Firmicus Maternus, *De Errore*, xxii, 2.

⁵ Diodor, iii, 59, 7; Firmicus Maternus, *De Errore*, iii.

⁶ Hepding, *Attis, seine Mythen und sein Kult*, pp. 147 ff.

⁷ Gressmann, op. cit., § 7.

⁸ Böhling, *Die Geisteskultur von Tarsos*, 1913, p. 32; Ed. Meyer, *Reich und Kultur der Chetiler*, 1914, pp. 117 ff.

⁹ Plutarch, de Is. et Osir., 69.

fertility exist, even to-day, in many countries, also in Europe, and Georgia. In Georgia, at the beginning of spring, a big fire is lighted in the vineyard and a pyre is burned "to drive away the evil spirits"—a custom which may surely be traced back to the same old cult of the god of wine (*Sandon* in Asia Minor).

These deities of vegetation are everywhere represented as having their seats in trees. Together with the plants, periodically they die, and, like them, periodically they awaken again. Therefore in spring-time they are hailed with great jubilation, and in autumn their death is mourned. Hence tree-worship is bound up with the cult of the gods of vegetation.¹

Of course, in the stories told in the Georgian texts, these representations are amalgamated with the Christian legends, and obscured by them. The intention of the Christian writers, too, was naturally to represent to the readers of their stories the victory of Christianity over paganism as vividly as possible. Their accounts contain, however, apart from all the miracle-tales, true traditions of the pagan past of Georgia, including tree-worship. Then in Georgia, too, trees which stood alone on hills or rocks, were considered as miracle-performing trees; from such trees came the wood for the making of the crosses²; in spring-time such trees were felled and carried by crowds of people with rejoicing. And the whole story of the "erection of the holy crosses" in our sources appears in general to be the echo of the old heathen cult, which Georgians in Mtskheta performed in honour of their national god *Zaden* resp. of some other god of vegetation. Also, there is no doubt that the legend of the "living pillar" did not, as Marr was inclined to believe,³ come to us under the influence of the Iranian legend of Goshtasp and the cypress of Kishmar. In the *Schah-Nameh* we read, indeed, that Goshtasp planted before the fire-temple a cypress which came from Paradise and it grew enormously; the king built a palace near this cypress and commanded all to go on foot to this cypress of Kishmar, to follow Zerdusht's ways and to renounce the idols of China, to think no more of their ancient customs, to repose under the shadow of the cypress and to direct themselves to the temple of fire, following the order of the true prophet, etc.⁴ And all this legend has not the slightest resemblance to the Georgian "living pillar", miraculous trees and crosses made from them and with their worship!⁵

In the above quoted Georgian version of the Protocol of the

¹ Cf. Ed. Meyer, *Geschichte I*, §§ 178, 484 f., p. 725; Hugo Gressmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 97 ff., 102 ff.

² Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

³ *Op. cit.*, pp. 15 f.—Cf. Spiegel, *Iranische Altertumskunde*, iii, p. 703.

⁴ Firdousi, *Le Livre des Rois*, trad. par M. Jules Mohl, vol. iv, pp. 384 f.

⁵ Cf. Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 140.

Ecumenical Council of Antioch, it is mentioned that in Armenia and also in Georgia "the invisibles" "in the trees" were revered. That points, indeed, to the fact that at this time in Armenia and Georgia tree-worship, just as much as any other heathen cult, had to be opposed by Christianity. Procopius of Cæsarea testifies also that the Abkhasians "until our time worship the woods and trees, because they in their simplicity consider them as deities".¹ Even to-day the tree cult is to be observed everywhere. The mountain-tribes of Khevsuret'i and Pshavet'i revere the "angel of the oak"; in K'art'li, a lime-tree (in T'edzam Valley) is adorned with offerings and white threads; the Abkhasians worship the god of the forest *Mizitkhu* and at the beginning of spring celebrate the first appearance of the flowers, with which all houses are adorned. In Megrelia we observe worship of large lime-trees and oaks, and the same belief in a god whom they call "king of the forest"; the Svans revere the "forest angel", etc.² It is the same with other Caucasian peoples in regard to tree-worship, especially with the Circassians,³ and, when we consider the details of this Georgian or Caucasian tree-worship, which still exists, we can come to no other conclusion than that it is related to Asia Minor tree-worship and that the old Georgian sources have really preserved the echo of the old Asia Minor - Georgian tree-worship.

XI

Now we should like to emphasize that the information in our sources concerning the pagan deities *Armaz* and *Zaden* cannot be considered as an echo, even a faint one, of the domination of Mazdaism in Georgia, as Marr thought. It is true that Mazdaism was spread in Georgia long before Christianity. In Mtskheta the fire-worship cult was practised. The magi had their altars there in a special quarter of the city, called Mogwt'ay (the quarter of the Magi). Many Georgians (but not the whole nation!) adopted some Persian customs, for instance, the non-burial of the dead, etc. Mazdaism, as we have said above, conducted an energetic struggle in Georgia against the first Christian propaganda, and also against the Christianity when it became the national religion of Georgia.⁴ But the national paganism defended itself against Mazdaism, just as Christianity did later on.

¹ *De Bello Gothico*, iv, 3, 14.

² Cf. Javakhishvili, *History*, 1st, pp. 86-9.

³ Evans, op. cit., p. 134. Concerning holy trees, woods, etc., revered by Georgians, Abkhasians, and Circassians, see Vera Lomia, *The Cult of Trees in Georgia*, *Bulletin du Musée de Géorgie*, iii, Tiflis, 1927, pp. 164-178 (in Georgian)]; cf. also Javakhishvili, *History*, 1st, pp. 86-9.

⁴ Cf. *The Life of Georgia*, pp. 117-125.

Quite unequivocal on this point is the information given in *The Life of Georgia* concerning an episode during the struggle between the Persian religion and the national Georgian paganism. Indeed, Leontius Mroveli relates of King P'arnajom as follows: "He built the castle *Zaden* and made an idol by the name *Zaden* and erected it on (the mountain) *Zaden*. After this event, he leaned to the Persian faith, to fire-worship, brought from Persia fire-servers and Magi, and settled them in Mtskheta, at the place now called (the quarter) of the Magi. And he began to offend the idols publicly.¹ Because of that, the inhabitants of Georgia hated him, for they had great faith in their idols. The majority of the Georgian *erist'avis* (dukes) rose against the king. They sent a messenger to the Armenian King, saying: 'Our king has turned disloyal to the faith of our fathers, he no longer reveres the gods, the rulers of Georgia. He has introduced his *father's religion* (that is, Persian, for P'arnajom on his father's side was a descendant of *Nimrod*, a Persian) and forsaken his *mother's religion* (that is, Georgian, for the king on his mother's side was a descendant of P'arnavaz, a Georgian). He is no more worthy to be our king. Give us thy son Arshak, whose wife is a descendant of the P'arnavazides, our kings. Bring us as help thy forces and we will expel P'arnajom, the introducer of the new religion. Thy son Arshak shall be our king and his wife, a daughter of our kings, shall be our queen.'"² The united Georgian-Armenian military forces, so *The Life of Georgia* further relates, really defeated and slew P'arnajom; and Arshak, the son of the Armenian king, ascended the Georgian throne (at the end of the second century B.C.).

- * Marr found this account from *The Life of Georgia* very strange: "thus the Persian magi offended *Armaz* and *Zaden*, that is *Ahura-Mazda* and *Mithra*, and the Georgians defended them as their national gods! At any rate, the historical perspective is very interesting," he said, and traced this monstrous absurdity to the unreliability of the information.³ But we consider this account as one of the most valuable pieces of information which *The Life of Georgia* has preserved with regard to old Georgian paganism. Certainly it was the fault of the scholar himself that this account appeared to him so absurd; he had started with the entirely wrong supposition that Mazdaism had completely exterminated Georgian paganism and had held, without any reason, the national Georgian pagan gods, *Armaz* and *Zaden* for *Ahura-Mazda* and *Mithra*! Naturally the Georgian nation resisted the heresy of their king who wanted to introduce a new religion as the national religion. It was a struggle of *Armaz* and of *Zaden* against

¹ That is, the native, national idols—*Armaz*, *Zaden*, etc.

² *The Life of Georgia*, ed. Brosset, pp. 34 f.; QMV, pp. 24 f.

³ Op. cit., p. 11 f.

Ahura-Mazda, for the Georgians carried on not only a political and national, but also a religious struggle against the Persians, before and after the introduction of Christianity into their country. And this story of P'arnajom, of his sad end, and of the introduction of the new dynasty of the Arshakides into Georgia at the end of the second century B.C. is, as already stated, but one incident in that long religious struggle of which our texts relate.¹

Again, it must be observed here that the "horrible sacrifices" which, according to our sources, were offered to the gods in Georgia, are incompatible with the Mazdaic religion—human sacrifice, in particular. For even in later times, when Mazdaism must have lost much of its original purity through its contact with the native cults in many countries, it knew no such "horrible sacrifices" as our texts mention. Especially *Zaden*, to whom these sacrifices were offered, can have no connection at all with the *yazātān*, who were "angels", personifications of the original Zoroastrian notions as *sraoša* "obedience towards God" (oppos. *aešma*, "devil")—who represented the Good, and equally impossible is it to identify *Armaz*, whom *The Life of St. Nino* and Leontius Mroveli described as an idol carrying helmet and sword, with *Ahura-Mazda*.

As to the figurative representations of *Zeus-Oramazdes*, of *Mithra-Helios-Appollo*, etc., which appear on the memorial to Antiochos I of Kommagene (69–34 B.C.) on the summit of Nimrod-Dagh,² they are to be traced back to the later identification of Persian deities with local gods, as, for instance, of *Ahura-Mazda* with the Asia Minor *Teshub*.³

XII

So we think that the information from the old Georgian sources threw quite a different light on Georgian paganism than had been hitherto conjectured by many scholars—above all, Marr. Marr's theory, which holds *Armaz* and *Zaden* for Iranian deities, and *Gatsi* and *Ga(im)* for Semitic names of gods, which entered the Georgian sources by way of Christian-Syriac literature, etc., is wrong. Only the Semitic origin of the goddess *It'rujan* has been correctly recognized

¹ The Georgians asked the Persian king, Khosrau Anushirvan, for his son Mirian, who was to be betrothed to the daughter of Asp'agur, king of Georgia, to be their king. But among their conditions they demanded that Mirian should embrace the old Georgian faith and that Persians should not intermingle with Georgians (4th cent. A.C.).

² Fr. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments figurés relatifs aux mystères de Mithra*, ii, p. 188.

³ Cf. Fr. Cumont, *Die orientalischen Religionen im Römischen Heidentum*, pp. 117; 135; 284⁴⁰; H. Gressmann, *Die orientalischen Religionen im hellenistisch-römischen Zeitalter*, p. 144; O. G. von Wesendonk, *Das Weltbild der Iranier*, pp. 247 f.

by Marr, but the name was wrongly analysed by him. Therefore, we consider Marr's judgment about the information from our texts also to be unjustified. "We see, really," he said, "that the authors try to attribute to them (that is, *Gatsi* and *Ga*) even a special national significance; but their tales (that is, those of the authors) can only serve to provide the strongest proof that these deities in Georgia were nothing but groundless and empty words."¹ But these "tales" gain quite another meaning when treated differently than by Marr. In our opinion, even the following words from *The Life of St. Nino* are of importance: "(The Georgians) considered stones and woods, and copper and iron and bronze forged in relief, as creators, and worshipped them as gods."² There the stone-, tree-, and metal-cult are indicated, the first two of which continue to exist in Georgia even at the present time, and the third is of importance because in olden times certain Georgian tribes were known in Western Asia as the best metal-workers.³ But we cannot go further into this matter here.

A question which should be raised is, why Strabo, who had travelled in Georgia and described moon-worship amongst the Albanians, neighbours of the Iberians, does not call the gods of Mtskhet'a, *Armaz*, *Zaden*, etc., by their names, and does not describe their cult. It can only be answered after a special and detailed examination of Strabo's information about the Caucasian peoples. But of course, Strabo's silence does not bring into question at all the reliability of the information of the Georgian texts.

The main task in investigating Georgian paganism is to distinguish the native resp. the Asia Minor elements of the religion, in so far as they have been preserved in Georgia, from the Sumerian-Babylonian, West Semitic, Mazdaic, and Christian elements amalgamated with them. One step in this direction was made by the late O. G. von Wesendonk in his book *Über Georgisches Heidentum*. But whatever has been done hitherto in this domain of research must only be regarded as a beginning, however noteworthy some of the work may be.⁴ It is just the oldest, very scanty, indeed, but yet interesting information about national Georgian paganism contained in the old Georgian texts that have either not been taken into consideration or not quite truly appreciated, or have just been treated in Marr's fashion. Therefore, it seemed to us an important task to make a new endeavour to contribute to the right understanding of these

¹ Op. cit., p. 17.

² Cf. Leontius Mroveli, op. cit., p. 69.

³ Gen. iv, 22; Xenoph., *Anabasis*, v, 5, i; Strabo, xii, 3, 19, etc.—Cf. Schrader, *Die Metalle*, 1906, p. 98; Javakhishvili, *History*, I^o, pp. 19 f., 23 f.

⁴ Cf. for instance, M. Kovalevski, *Law and Custom in the Caucasus* (in Russian), Moscow, 1890.

accounts, so as to render them useful for our research. Also in connection with old Asia Minor research, we think this may be of some interest.

ABBREVIATIONS

- ABRT. = J. A. Craig, *Assyrian and Babylonian Religious Texts*.
 BBS. = L. W. King, *Babylonian Boundary-stones*.
 CT. = *Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets, etc., in the British Museum*.
 JRAS. = *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*.
 KARI. = E. Ebeling, *Keilschrifttexte aus Assur religiösen Inhalts*.
 KAT. = E. Schrader, *Die Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament*, 2. Auflage, besorgt von H. Winckler und H. Zimmern.
 KB. = E. Schrader, *Keilinschriftliche Bibliothek*.
 KUB. = *Keilschrift-Urkunden aus Boghazköi*.
 LIH. = L. W. King, *The Letters and Inscriptions of Hammurabi*.
 Magic = L. W. King, *Babylonian Magic and Sorcery*.
 Maqlû. = K. L. Tallquist, *Die assyrische Beschwörungsserie Maqlû*.
 I—VR. = H. C. Rawlinson, *The Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia*.
 SAK. = F. Thureau-Dangin, *Die Sumerischen und Akkadischen Königsinschriften*.
 ZDMG. = *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*.
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